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THE BENEFIT OF Early Piety,

Recommended

To all Young Persons,

And particularly to Those of the

CITY OF London.

The First Part.

By *William Smythies*, the Morning Lecturer at Saint *Michael Cornhil*, London.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

Epiſtle Dedicatory.

TO

Fredrick Hern *Eſquire*,

Mr. { Nathaniel Hern,
{ Thomas Hern.

The three Sons of Sir *Nathaniel Hern*, Late Alderman of *London*, Deceaſed.

Gentlemen,

I *Was the more enclined to gratify my Young Auditors at my Morning Lecture by a Publication of this Diſcourſe, that I might preſent it to you as a ſeaſonable gift in your Minority.*

Your Father! Your Worthy Father *is never to be forgotten by me, nor can I hear of his Name without a sorrowful heart to think, not only of mine, but of the loss which this City and the whole Nation sustained by his death: Much less can I omit any opportunity by which I may express my gratitude for his extraordinary favours to me* and mine.

I hope my Children after me will not forget to bless God, and Pray for you, for his sake; especially, that Son for whose Advancement in the World he gave a very great sum of Money, though he had never seen him, and had but very little knowledge of me.

There were many of my Auditors at his doleful Funeral, who

were

were troubled that the account which I gave of him was not Printed. But besides the weak management of it, I have since understood another Reason, and a very great one, why his Relations did not consent to it. Although I said so much of him, as raised the Admiration of many that heard me, yet the one half was not told them, nor indeed was it known to me. I had heard nothing of the Schools which he maintained on both sides the River, for the Education of Seamens Children, whose Fathers were slain in the Service of his KING and Country; Nor of the many hundred pounds which he gave for the disposal of so many of them, as were fit for Employments, with special order

to that Worthy Person whom he entrusted, to come to him for more as there was occasion for it. Nor had I heard of many other great things which were done by him.

It is not my Design now to give a particular account of his Life and Actions to the World; nor do I think it can be done by any other, because I seldome meet with any to this day, who were of his acquaintance, but I hear new discoveries of those marvellous Acts of Charity which he endeavoured by all means to conceal: and I believe that many which he did can never be known.

It was his pleasure to give such strict and severe injunctions of secrecy, that I should suspect my self

as

as guilty of unfaithfulness to his memory, and of offending his Relations who are of the same temper, if it did not appear that my design in it is the good of you His dear Children, *who I hope will be pleased to keep this Book by you, and make use of the Epistle as a very prevailing Argument to practice that which is contained in the Body of it.*

That which I shall mention to you concerning your Father, shall only be some passages which may provoke you to Early Piety; *and if they do not, they may exceedingly add to your Guilt and Condemnation.*

That which I shall first mention to you, shall be his great Concern that the Children of the Poor

might bear the YOKE *in their* Youth. *He was pleased to intrust me with a considerable Sum of Money, which I received by quarterly payments, for the instruction of poor Children in the Parish of* Cripplegate; *with special charge that they should be Catechized and Instructed in the Principles of Religion. Those Children who were the best Proficients, were to be encouraged with Money or New Cloathes, or how I thought convenient, without any Limitation as to the expense of it.*

Another instance of this nature was, concerning the Children in Christs Hospital. *He was very desirous, a little before his last Sickness, that I should undertake*

to

to Catechize and Instruct them publickly in their Hall every Lords day in the Evening before Supper, for which he was willing to have given a very Generous Reward: But my Engagements otherwise, were to the utmost of what my strength would bear, and therefore he desisted from it. And that which exceeded both, was his great Bounty towards the Instruction of the Children in Wales, *of which I am not able to give any particular Account.*

I mention these things to you, that you may consider what a sad thing it would be, if you the Children of such a Father, should resist the force of a Pious Education, and of the strivings of God's

Holy

Holy Spirit in your tender minds, so as to refuse the YOKE *of Obedience to God's Commands, And to resolve that you will not suffer any Early Impressions of Religion to prevail with you. What a dreadful thing would it be, if his Children should be* Torn in peices *for forgetting God, who thought he could not give too much that the Children of Strangers might* remember *him, and be Obedient to him.*

And for fear you should be contented with an Empty-Handed Religion, and that either Pride or Covetousness, or Debauchery should prove to be your Destruction in a Wicked World, and in one of the worst Ages of it; I would put you

in mind of ſome paſſages concerning your Father, which by the aſſiſtance of Gods Grace, may be very uſeful and beneficial for the preſervation of you from thoſe evils.

If you are Proud, and ſcornful of others who are of Inferiour Rank to you, you are the moſt unlike your Father that ever any Children were, and it would be a ſtrange degeneracy from his Nature and Diſpoſition. He was of a moſt Familiar and Courteous Spirit, never diſcovering the leaſt thought of his Riches or Honour when he was amongſt his Friends, but entertaining them with all Kindneſs and Lowlineſs of Mind. *I never heard the leaſt word from him by which*

I could conjecture that he valued himself for what he enjoyed in this World. It was somewhat strange to all that knew him, to observe how he discharged his Engagement to this City, *particularly in the year of his Shreivalry, with most prodigious Generosity, and yet without the least shew of Ostentation in his own deportment.*

If Covetousness or the Love of the World should Prevail with you, it would be no less Monstrous than the former; for certainly no man ever valued the World less for himself, and more for the good that he might do to others by it, than he did. It was his great fear, lest those whom he thought fit to entrust with the disposal of his Cha-

rity

rity ſhould be too modeſt, and not make their Addreſſes to him ſo often as he deſired: And for the Prevention of it, his ſaying was, I pray be not afraid to come to me again, for I thought I had enough of the World when my Eſtate was not ſo great as now it is. *There is a Citizen of known Worth, whoſe great concern it hath been for many Years to employ and provide for great numbers of the* Poor, *whom he would rebuke if he did not, in few Words, tell him what he wanted for the* Poor, *that he might not take too little. One of the ſtricteſt Charges that ever I received from him, was to let him know of ſuch as were in want, and*

would

would make a frugal improvement of a Stock of Money, especially of Widdows *whose* Husbands *were lately dead & left them Poor as well as Sorrowful: And that I might make my application to him with the greater confidence, he would tell me, that* He had rather give five Pounds than five Shillings. *And when I gratified his desire in it, he hath sent me away with such a plentiful relief, that as tis said in* Job, I made the Widdows heart to sing for joy; *but they never knew their Benefactor.*

I have sometimes thought, that he concealed his Charity not only from his Love to true Goodness for its own sake, but likewise of

the

the ſake of his own quiet. I am confident he ſeldom went abroad but he met with thoſe who would have made a noiſe in the Streets by their loud acknowledgments of his Bounty, which would have been a diſturbance to his humble Spirit.

I hope by this, you will conſider what a ſad thing it would be, if you his Children ſhould be found in the number of the Covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth, *whoſe Father doubtleſs rejoyced more in that God gave him a Liberal heart, than that he gave him a plentiful Eſtate. What will become of you if you ſhould fall in love with the World, which is inconſiſtent with the Love of God? What a ſad thing it would be if*

you

you should heap up Riches which should only prove a load to press you down to the Bottomless Pit? I know it would be a great reproach to you to be called the Narrow-Soul'd Children of a Liberal Soul'd Father: That it should be said that Riches were given to the Father for his own good, and for the good of thousands more; and Riches are left to the Children for their hurt, because for the good of none else in the World.

If this more general Argument prevailes not with you, there is another which doth so neerly concern you, that I know not how you can withstand it, unless you offer great violence to your selves, and some kind of contempt to the Memory

mory of your Father, or at leaſt to his Judgment and Diſcretion. He deſired me, as well as others, to come the oftner to his Bank for the ſupply of the Neceſſitous, becauſe he did not intend to bequeath any thing in his Will to Charitable Uſes: For which he gave theſe two Reaſons; One was, That there was not in many places due care taken to fulfil the will of the Dead. *He was exceedingly offended, if there was but the leaſt alienation of a Gift, which was a great argument of his fidelity and uprightneſs. But that which I ſuppoſe was his greateſt reaſon was,* That he ſhould leave an Eſtate to them that would do good with it when he was dead

dead and gone. *This reason depended upon his confidence, that he had* begotten Children after his own likeness; *and that you, when you should come to the management of your Estates, would follow his steps, which will lead you to the glorious rewards of another Life.*

As to the other Evil, viz. *Debauchery, I hope I should not need to have mentioned it to you, but that you will have a loathing to it from the bottom of your Heart, as your Father had, as that which is every way destructive. That it shall never be said,* The Father had an Estate by which he kept many alive, and his Sons only made use of it to kill

kill themſelves both Souls and Bodies.

I will commend one Inſtance more of your Fathe's Charity, and that was to poor Schollars *in the* Univerſities. *The* Univerſities *had a great and unknown Loſs by his Death. I knew his Charity and Liberality was ſo great towards them, that I adventured a little before his departure, to ſend a poor Schollar back to the* Univerſity *(who had been forced to leave the* College *upon the Death of his Father, and was in a very deſolate condition) upon the confidence I had of his Charity; but though it pleaſed God to take him away, yet I found another Gentleman of your Fathers temper, who*

was

was exceedingly bountiful, so that the Schollar continued till he took his Degree in the University. I never desired his Charity in such Cases, because the Church is overstock't, nor do I beg of any other, but where the Schollar is already admitted, and it is too late for him to betake himself to any other way of Subsisting: And in such a Case, your Father was exceedingly Kind and Liberal, of which I will give one remarkable Instance, which was told to me by one of his Intimates, and I am the more inclined to give a Relation of it, because the pleasantness of it may make it acceptable to you, and be some inducement to you to consider the whole of what I have given you concerning him. There

There was a Quaker, *whose Son was admitted in the* University, *and the poor Lad was in great danger of being ruin'd by his Fathers being of that ridiculous Perswasion. The* Quaker *told your Father, that he would remove his Son from the* University, *for fear he should be a* Priest, *saying, If I forget not, That he had rather see his Son hang'd, than that he should be a Priest. Your Father gave him a smart reply, by asking him, Why the Son might not as well take the Liberty to be a Priest, as the Father took the Liberty to be a* Quaker: *And in short, perceiving that there was either more of Poverty, or Covetousness, than Conscience in the*

Case,

Case, he told him, that he would maintain his Son for him; and so he did, till he took his Degree, and then he procured a good Living for him, which I suppose the Quaker was very glad of. Charity to poor Schollars, well placed and prudently managed, is most highly commendable; because where there is an Ambition of Learning, and Poverty removes the Schollar, before he hath any considerable attainments: both considered, do make the condition of young men to be very Deplorable; of which I have known several Instances, and been concerned for some of them.

The

Thus I have given an account of what your Father was abroad: the great good that he did in the World, that if God continues your lives and give you the like opportunities you may not want a fit pattern to Act by.

I might in the next place tell you what your Father was at home in his own Family, according to what I have been credibly informed, and sometimes had occasion to take notice of. I hope that it will please God to continue the Life of your Honored Mother, that She may see you happy in a Married State, and following the Example of your Father, who was certainly one of the most indulgent Husbands that ever the World afforded. And that there

is so much of the sweetness of his nature in yours; that she shall never need to tell you that you are unlike him. I once heard that he blamed her for not taking a considerable Sum of Money, without asking his leave, for the disposal of a poor Ministers Son: which was a great Argument of his kindness to her as well as his charity to the Lad; and that he was none of those ill-natur'd men who are alwayes suspitious lest those whom they Endowed with all their worldly goods *should have the free disposal of any part of them.*

There was another great instance of his tender Love exprest to me concerning her: I had occasion to wait upon him, and when I asked

him

him concerning his Ladies health, he was in so great a passion of grief that he could not on a sudden, speak to me, although there was no great danger as to her Life. He was doubtless a most chast and vertuous Husband, whose endearments in his conjugal relation were not corrupted in an unclean and vitious Age.

He was such an indulgent, and yet such a prudent Father, that it was his great care to give you his Children a strict Education, mixed with safe encouraging Delights and Pleasures. It is your happiness in one respect, that he left you in that age in which the Eldest of you could scarce be sensible of your great loss, for if your Lamenting for him had born a propor-

tion to his Worth, you must have been amongst the most sorrowful mourners that ever lost a Father.

He was so good a Master, that his Servants might lament for him as for a Father; for if they were once admitted into his Family, and were fit to receive kindness from him, They had reason to bless God all their dayes for the bountiful Provision which he made for them.

There is one thing more which I have to tell you concerning him which exceeds all that I have mentioned, and is the Spring and Fountain of all these Streams, viz. His great Piety towards God. It is very possible that I may be accounted preposterous, and very unmethodical in that I did not mention

that

that in the first place, but have spoken of his Love to his Neighbour before his Love to God, which is the first and great Commandment. *I am not much concerned to make an Apology for it; I hope it will be sufficient to excuse me, if I propound this advantage to you by it; that being mentioned in the last place, it will not so easily slip out of your minds. That which is spoken last, hath oftimes the deepest impression.*

His love to others proceeded from his love to God, and it will appear by the account that I have to give of it, that he loved the Lord his God with all his Heart, and with all his Soul; and with all his Strength. *There*

were three great Demonstrations of it.

1. His diligent care to perform the Duties of Religion. He was carefsul in observing the command of our Blessed Saviour, by which his Disciples were to shew their sincerity, which is the Life and Soul of Religion, When thou prayest enter into thy Closet, &c. His resolution was the same with Holy Davids, My voice shalt thou hear in the Morning, in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee. He spent some considerable time in his private devotions, and his Family knew very well that whatever occasions there were, he must not be interrupted, because there were

were none ſo great as that which he was then concerned in.

I pray God of Heaven, that you his Children may follow his example, in this great inſtance of his ſincere Piety: for doubtleſs no man begins to be religious in earneſt, till he begins to pray to God in ſecret. That Children are required to read the Scriptures, to ſay their Catechiſm, and their Prayers, is only an evidence of the Piety of their Parents; but when Children of their own accord betake themſelves to the duties of Religion, and Particularly to pray in ſecret; then is it, and not till then, that they begin to be religious: Before, what they did, was becauſe their Parents commanded them; but what they do

now, is becauſe God commands them; and they obey him.

Beſides his ſecret Devotion, he was careful to perform the duties of Religion in his family: That which is now laid aſide as unneceſſary and ſuperfluous. We live in an Age in which wickedneſs domineers, and keeps Religion, not only out of mens hearts, but out of their Houſes likewiſe. Men are ſo far from receiving the Power of Godlineſs, that they will not ſo much as entertain the form, or any appearance of it in their Families. He, like Joſhua, reſolved, that whatever choyce others made, He and his Houſe would ſerve the Lord.

I pray God you may follow his example

example in this likewise, if God continues your lives till you become Masters of Families; And that you may resolve to begin at first, for I am confident there are many Housekeepers who having neglected the Duties of Religion at first, do afterwards wish that they had observed them; but since they did not, they think it would be an alteration which their Servants would wonder at, and others deride, and therefore they continue all their dayes ashamed of Christ before Men, and omit that which they can give no account of to God, and to their own Consciences.

2. His great Piety appeared in his care, to fix and promote it in others. If his Servants wanted Bi-

bles, he would most readily and gladly be at the Charge of Furnishing them with that Book. If there were any that could not read, some of the other Servants were allowed time to learn them, and both Teacher and Schollar had a good Requital. He thought allurements the best meanes to make his Servants in Love with Religion, and therefore he made bargains with them, that he would give so much for such a part of the Catechisme, and for every Chapter that they learnt by heart, as they had Reason to account a great encouragement to make them diligent.

He was exceedingly concern'd that his Servants should give diligent attention to the Word of God upon

upon the Lords-Day, and the Method he commanded, is worthy of all imitation. He would require an account what they remembred of the Sermon, and then commanded them to write it down, that they might not forget it: an excellent meanes to quicken their Affections in hearing, and to make a lasting impression of it upon their minds. He was so much concern'd that those that were Young should be Religious, that as I am inform'd, he commanded, that his Children, when carried in Arms, should be brought into his Parlour whilest he was examining the rest. 'Tis very probable that he thought his Young Children would be the better prepar'd by it, against the time came in which they

they could be capable of doing what they took some little notice of in others. Thus he had that care of you, that Timothy's *Mother and Grand-Mother had of him; that* of a Child, *(an infant properly) he might know the Holy Scriptures. I hope you will be the better for this which I have mentioned concerning your Father, and that you will be careful to bear the* YOKE *in your Youth, that you may delight afterwards to encourage other Young Persons to do the same.*

3. *His Love to God appeared in his Love to Good Men, he was a great Lover of all whom he thought Loved God. He was none of those who were more for Parties than for Piety; much less was he so weak*

as to make true goodneſs to be an Appendix to an Opinion. I know that ſome accounted him a Lover of Diſſenters, much more than of the Conformiſts: but I am ſure he had a very great value for many Orthodox Divines of the Church of England. *He required of me that the Children for whom I was concerned ſhould learn the Church-Catechiſm. And he was not only devout in the uſe of the Prayers of the Church in Publick, but to my knowledg he hath been ſo in his own Family likewiſe. He was ſo far from being in love with an opinion for the ſake of it, that he could not endure an opinioniſt. He was a true lover of goodneſs and of all whom he thought to be good men. And the*

God

God of Heaven grant that you may be so likewise.

The short Volum which I am confin'd to in this Treatise, doth not permit me to enlarge upon a Relation of your Fathers great Worth, which I could do with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

I know that this Book *will come into the hands of some who will blame me that I have said too little, but if They and your Relations would grant me their Assistance, I should most gladly mend my Fault. In the mean while, I hope they will pardon me, if I have offended them. The truth is, my mind never was at quiet since his death, to think that nothing hath been published concerning him. And since I have pro-*

pounded

pounded to my ſelf ſo good a deſign as the Benefit of You his Children, I cannot think that I have done amiſs though I have done too little.

To this I will only add a Faithful Promiſe, That I will never be guilty of the Sin of Ingratitude, By ceaſing to Pray for you in my daily Prayers. *And I ſhall exceedingly rejoyce, and be thankful to Gods Providence for any opportunity, whileſt I live, to expreſs my ſelf,*

Gentlemen,

Your very Faithful
and Humble Servant,

Decem. 22. 1683.

William Smythies.

Sir

Sir **Nathaniel Hern** Departed this Life at His Houſe in *Loathbury*, and was Interred in the Church of St. *Olave Jewry*, where there is a Monument Erected to His Memory with this Inſcription.

HEre Lyes in hopes of a Glotious Reſurrection, the Body of Sir **Nathaniel Hern** Knight, Late Sheriff, and at his Death Alderman of this Famous City, and Governour of the Honorable *Eaſt India* Company; Son to *Nicholas*, and Grand-Son to *Richard Hern*, ſomtimes Alderman alſo of this City; a Perſon of great Prudence, and Indefatigable Induſtry in the Management of all Publick Affairs; of Exemplary Piety, Spotleſs Integrity, and diffuſive Charity, having

ing with his own hand dispensed very considerable Summs to Charitable Uses, particularly to the Relief of Poor Seamen, and Educating their Children. He took to Wife *Judeth* eldest Daughter of Sir *John Frederick* Knight, Alderman, and sometimes Lord Mayor of *London*, His now Sorrowful Widdow, by whom he had divers Children, and left three hopeful Sons Surviving, *viz. Frederick*, *Nathaniel* and *Thomas*, to whose, and to this Nations great loss, as also to the great loss of all them that knew him. He departed this Life the 16*th.* of *August*, 1679. *Ætat.* 50.

TO

TO THE READER.

Reader,

I Will not Apologize for the Publication of this Diſcourſe, as might be expected conſidering how many Books are extant which were written by Pious and Learned Men on purpoſe to perſwade Young Perſons to the Practice of true Piety and Holineſs; becauſe it is a matter of the greateſt Moment, and all that hath been done hath been too little to Effect it. All good men cannot but be extreamly troubled to ſee how Vice and Wickedneſs growes up with thoſe that are Young, and how they encreaſe in it faſter than they do in ſtature; as if they thought it would be their great happineſs to arrive at

at high degrees of Impiety, and to be past controul. This doth not only make the hearts of good men sad, from the consideration of that Temporal and Everlasting Destruction, which Young Men hasten to themselves, and the unexpressible mischiefs which ensue to the present age; but likewise of those evils which it presages to the next Generation.

We live in unhappy dayes, in which we may justly suspect, That the enemy of our Salvation hath set *Men of Years* at variance about Circumstances in Religion, that he may possess the Minds of those that are *Young* with a dislike to the Practice of it.

For this Reason I have been willing, notwithstanding what hath been already done, to publish some part of what I have discoursed to those who come Early in the morning

ing

ing of the day, and of their Years, to be my Auditors; in which, through the Grace and Bleſſing of God, I have had ſome Succeſs; which is and will alwayes be a great ſatisfaction to me. I have not proceeded in it ſo far as I expected, but (being confined to a ſhort and cheap Treatiſe) was forced to brake off ſomewhat abruptly at the Begining of an Argument which I intended chiefly to inſiſt upon, *viz.* The danger of a Late Intended-Repentance. The truth is, I was very unwilling to make a ſhorter Dedication, conſidering mine and the Worlds great Obligation to the memory of *That Great Man*, whoſe Life and Actions had been an excellent Subject for a far greater Volume than this is; and that is the reaſon I could proceed no farther in my intended matter. If therefore it pleaſeth God to continue

tinue my Life, and to make this Book useful and serviceable to the end for which I designed it, I shall hasten the Publication of a Second Part.

Fazewel.

THE

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THE

The Benefit of Early Piety.

Lament. *chap.* 3. *ver.* 27.
It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoake in his Youth.

THoſe that would know the reaſon of the Prophets Lamentations, may read the two laſt Chapters of the 2 *Kings*,& when they have conſidered the doleful Miſeries which the ſins of a ſtubborn and rebellious People brought upon themſelves, and upon the Land of

their Nativity; it may make their *Eyes to run down with Teares*, as *Jeremiah* did.

But I am not concern'd in the tragick part of the Book, having found a Text in it which is conſolatory, and containes that Advice, which is the fitteſt to prevent all *Lamentations:* A Recomendation of early Piety, for want of which it is, that all miſeries both in this Life and that which is to come, do befall the Children of men.

A young man that feares God and is Religious, hath wiſely ſecured himſelf betimes from being miſerable here or hereafter. It is a Text very ſeaſonable in this Age, in which there is nothing ſo much neglected. And it is a Text very ſeaſonable in this Congregation, where I am under a ſpecial Engagement to treat with young Perſons about the great concern of Life and Immortality: I ſhould not

not otherwiſe fulfill the deſire of my long-ſince deceaſed Benefactor. But beſides this there are other Inducements to it. I have conſidered the advantage that I have, in that I have none in competition with me. I have no Objections to anſwer. I am affirming that which none denies in Words but only in Practice. There are none in Heaven, or Hell, or in this World but acknowledge, that *it is good for a man that he bear the Yoak in his Youth:* I am only contending on the behalf of the young mans Reaſon and Conſcience, againſt the baſe propenſity of his corrupt Nature. I have likewiſe conſidered, that I am undertaking a Task in which all men wiſh me good ſucceſs. There are few men in the world ſo hardned in wickedneſs, as not to rejoyce when they ſee young men, eſpecially if related to them, piouſly and vertuouſly diſpoſed:

And 'tis very probable, that it is becauſe they find to their great, though conceal'd Terrour of mind, the want of it in themſelves: For howſoever men that have begun in their youth to caſt off God and Religion, ſeem to out brave the Law of God and their own Conſciences, and to go on undauntedly as if they had made a good Choice for themſelves; the contrary is moſt certainly true, and they have ſo many checks from an upbraiding Conſcience, that they confeſs at laſt they never had that pleaſure which they ſeemed to have, and therefore would have all young men whom they wiſh well, to be wiſer in their firſt Choice than they have been. It might be of great force to perſwade young men to be Religious at firſt, to conſider, how quickly they will wiſh they had been ſo. Moſt certain it is, that it is equally impoſſible for any

any man, to give an account of all the happineſs that Early Piety brings to men, and the intollerable miſeries that befall men for want of it.

There is a double ſenſe of the words according to the various interpretation of the word YOAKE. Some by it underſtand Affliction, concluding that the Prophet is comforting the young Captives in their Diſtreſſes, who were moſt apt to be impatient. And this is very agreeable to that which goes immediately before. *It is good that a man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord.* Now, becauſe of all perſons thoſe that are young are moſt impatient and unquiet when they are under Affliction, he tells thoſe of that Age, that it is good for them to bear the Yoak. The word YOAK in the Scripture doth often ſignify ſome grievous Affliction or Trouble which God layes upon men for their diſobedience,

obedience, as in *Deut.* 28. 48. 1 *Kings* 14, 4. *Esa* 9. 4. and many other places. The words in this sense affords a very useful Observation, *viz.* that,

Obser. Afflictions are very useful and beneficial to those that are young. *David* said, *Before I was Afflicted I went astray.* None are so apt to go astray as young Persons, and nothing usually prevails to bring them into the way in which they should walk, as Affliction. It is therefore very happy for young Persons that Affliction should come before their youth be gone: Where it is otherwise, where Health and Strength and Prosperity continues during that Age; when ever Affliction comes it causeth the Sinner to make such terrible Reflections upon the Actions of his youth, as may make him wish, that it had come time enough to have prevented his Evil courses. As it was

said

ſaid of *Ephraim Jer.* 31. 18. *Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed as a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoake*; and in the following verſe, after Affliction brought him to Repentance, he ſaith, *I was aſhamed yea even confounded becauſe I did bear the Reproach of my youth.* In ſuch caſes, how happy is the man whom God chaſtiſeth in his youth, by which *that ſhame and confuſion* is prevented. If it happens that young men reject all good Counſel at firſt, and continue their Health and Strength without Affliction for many years, they prove the worſt men, ſpending their days and years in contracting that pollution and defilement which makes them odious and abominable to God, *Moab hath been at eaſe from his youth, he hath been ſetled upon his Lees, and hath not been emptied from Veſſel to Veſſel, neither hath he gone into Captivity, therefore his taſte*

remaineth in him, his ſcent is not changed. I may more particularly ſhew, that Afflictions are beneficial to young Perſons, as they tend to the Removal of thoſe evils, which the weakneſs of their Age makes them exceedingly prone and addicted to

1*ſt.* Youth is a very raſh and inconſiderate Age, in which Paſſion and Humour domineers. There is not uſually that Conſideration and Deliberation which is neceſſary to ſteer the courſe of mens Actions. When *Rehoboam* asked counſel of the young men, they were for *Whips* and *Scorpions*, which quickly made havock and brought all to confuſion.

And as young men are furious to others, ſo they are very fooliſh for themſelves, in that they conſider not the ſudden deſtruction which they bring upon themſelves. This the Wiſe man took ſpecial notice

notice of, *Prov.* 7. 7. *I beheld among the ſimple ones a young man void of underſtanding*, that is, void of Conſideration, for we can ſcarcely imagine that there is any young man, but underſtands that lewd courſes bring men to miſery and deſtruction. Affliction is an excellent means to bring the young man to conſideration of himſelf. The hearing of Gods Word many years doth not uſually bring men to ſuch an inward ſenſe of God, as one *Moneths* Affliction in their youth time. When they are in health, if they hear their Duties they think 'tis time enough to practice them, but when a ſharp Affliction comes, they bethink themſelves that they have ſtaid too long already. Affliction ſhakes the two parts of which man conſiſts, his Soul and Body, and makes him think of their parting, and of what is unavoidably neceſſary in order to it. 'Tis death to

ſome men to mind the things of God and of Religion, till Death forces them to it, *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and enquired early after God*, Pſal. 78. 34.

2. Youth is a Proud Age. Pride is the *Sin*, and I may ſay, the *Companion* of young Perſons. They love to ſpend their Money and Time for that which doth not Profit, but makes them Ridiculous to others at preſent, and afterwards to themſelves. Pride puffs up their minds, but Affliction pricks the bladder and lets out the wind; it lets them know that Mortal Bodies and Sinful Souls are not things to be Proud of. The great Care and Study of young People is how to dreſs their out-ſides, and this makes them delight in the Antick Faſhions of the Age: Affliction makes them think how neceſſary it is to adorn their minds, and that they ſhould

ſhould be *All Glorious within.* They are apt to ſtrutt in the World as *Nebuchadnezzar* did in his ſtately Palace, as if it were all their own; but if Affliction comes it brings *them*, as it did *him*, to their Reaſon and Underſtanding, and lets them know that there is a great God to be Adored with all Humility and Reverence, and that they are made to Admire him in whom there is all Perfection, and not themſelves in whom there is nothing but the greateſt Imperfection, Folly and Vanity.

3. Youth is in many a very extravagant Age, in which men make haſte to throw away their ſubſtance in Riotous living, by which they do great hurt to themſelves and no good to any others. Affliction brings the young Prodigal to himſelf, and then to his Father; It makes him know that the things of this World are of greater uſe

both

both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, than to be thrown away as if they were good for as little as he that makes no good uſe of them.

4. Youth is in ſome a very covetous Age. Where young men do not run into Prodigality, by which they are derided and laught at by men, they run into the extream of Covetouſneſs, and love of the World by which they make haſte to be abhorred of God. They think they have a great while to live, and therefore they do exceedingly pleaſe themſelves with the enjoyment of Earthly things. The young man in the Goſpel had ſuch a brave Eſtate, that he would not exchange it for the Kingdom of Heaven, when our Saviour proffered to make the Bargain. Affliction is of excellent uſe to cure the young mans Covetouſneſs, for it quickly lets him ſee that as the Worldling orders it,

Riches

Riches do no good to the beſt and moſt durable part of man. Affliction puts the young man in mind of *The day of Gods Wrath* in which *Riches profit not.*

5. Youth is an unclean Age. The Souls of young Perſons, and too often their Bodies likewiſe, are defiled with Luſts, and therefore the Apoſtle calls them *Youthfull Luſts*; Affliction is a great Remedy againſt thoſe, not only in a Phiſical ſenſe as they weaken the Body, but as they cleanſe the Mind from ſinful Thoughts, and fixes it upon better things. Afflictions put young men in mind of God, for whom both Souls and Bodies muſt be kept Pure and Undefiled. It cauſeth them to make *Jobs Covenant with their Eyes*, that they may not let in pollution to their Souls by tempting Objects.

Before I proceed to that which I chiefly deſign, I would make two

or

or three Inferences from this Observation

Inf. 1*ſt.* If Affliction be good for young men, let this beſpeak their Patience and Submiſſion under the Afflicting hand of God. Let not young men think it a hard caſe that they ſhould not have their Health and Liberty in the Prime of their years, when others are ſtrong and vigorous: I would ask them what they would do with it? If they would have it only that they may purſue youthful Luſts and Pleaſures, they have no reaſon to expect that God ſhould grant their deſires, for that were for God to find Strength and the Devil to find Work; it is good for them that God ſhould *Bind them in fetters, and hold them in cords of Affliction,* at firſt, that he may *ſhew them their Tranſgreſſions* before they are ſo multiplyed as to become incorrigeable, which too often happens

to

to young men when they are let alone too long. Young men ſhould conſider that they come into the World with ſuch ſtubborn corrupt natures, that there had need to be an early Reſtraint, and ſometimes nothing but the YOAKE of Affliction will do it. Young men ſhould conſider what is ſaid in *Job*, chap. 11. ver. 12. *Man is born like a Wild Aſſes Colt.* The Scripture tells us *Jer.* 2 24. that the Wild Aſs is a Creature ſo hard to tame, that men will not *weary themſelves* to catch her. And where ever the Old Creature is Wild, the young one is much more. If they cannot take the old one, much leſs the young one when it is grown ſtrong. Afflictions come to young men to catch them in the Wilderneſs of this World (in which there are thouſands of Extravagants who are like Wild Beaſts) & to take up them for the uſe and ſervice

of

of him that made them, and whoſe the Earth is in which they are ſo wild. The young man would willingly live in the world, as if he came into it for nothing but to *ſnuff up the Wind*, to perſiſt in an untam'd Extravagancy and Wantoneſſe. He is ſo eagerly bent upon it, that his Relations and all his Friends may *weary themſelves* in their endeavours to reſtrain him; but if God ſends a ſharp Affliction, that may bring him to ſome good and uſefulneſs in the World. The nature of man is ſuch, that thoſe that are old have need of Correction from God, and therefore much more thoſe that are young.

2. If it be good for young men to bear the Yoak of Affliction, let them look back and conſider, whether they have not born this Yoak, and what good they received by it, that if they have they may

may be thankful to God for their Afflictions, by which he brought them from going *aſtray* to *learn his Word*, and live in obedience to his Commands. But if they have born the Yoak, and it hath done them no good, let them conſider their evill condition. Afflictions to the Soul are like Phyſick to the Body; They are ſent by the great Phyſitian *to purge away Sin Eſa.* 27. 9. If the Phyſick doth not work, it endangers the life of the Body, and if afflictions do not purge, they endanger the life of the Soul. No man comes out of that Furnace as he went into it; but is either melted or hardned by it. If hardned, his condition is exceeding bad, in ſo much, that it may be in vain for me to ſpeak to ſuch from the Pulpit, becauſe I queſtion whether there are any ſuch to hear me. They are commonly men of the moſt diſſolute lives, and find it neceſſary to avoid

avoid all occaſions which may put them in mind of what they have done. When ônce a young man hath broken looſe from the Cords of Affliction and returns to ſin again, he purſues his Luſts and Pleaſures the more eagerly, that he may have no leiſure to think of his new-encreaſed Guilt, that his Conſcience may not find time to check him by his ſick-bed Prayers, and Vowes to God. But more particularly, I earneſtly deſire all ſuch perſons who have born the Yoak of Affliction in their Youth, and it hath not proved good for them to conſider,

1. The frailty of their Natures, & how quickly Afflictions may return & death take them away. I mention this, becauſe men live ſinful lives after they have eſcaped Affliction, in hope of long Life. They do not live as if our Saviour had ſaid, *Behold thou art made whole, ſin no more*; but

but as if he had ſaid, Behold thou art made whole, thou ſhalt be ſick no more and therefore ſin on. One would think that of all men he ſhould have leaſt reaſon to truſt to the continuance of his Life, who was in danger of death in the very ſtrength of his Years: That he ſhould be alwayes in a readineſs to die, who apprehended death ſo near him at that Age, when men think themſelves fartheſt from it.

2. Suppoſe your life continues many yeares, If you were ſo afraid to die becauſe of the ſins of a few yeares before you were Afflicted, what dreadful Horror and Confuſion will the ſins of a great many years bring you into, which you were guilty of after your Affliction. To which I may add.

3. Every ſin after Affliction is of a more heinous Nature. Before you were afflicted you were in the

the greater hope that God would have mercy upon you, becauſe you were young and apt to Inadvertency, and did not conſider what you had done: But your ſins after affliction are more deliberate Acts, they are ſins upon ſecond thoughts: Sins which are committed againſt thoſe checks of conſcience, which do particularly relate to the ſick-bed Vows and Promiſes.

4. There is no Folly or Madneſs to be compar'd to it. He diſobliges that friend who delivered him from trouble, and from whom he expects kindneſs and favour when trouble comes again. He was afraid of the enemy of his Soul before, and yet he delivers himſelf into his hand again, and can not but know that he will take faſter hold of him. He is encreaſing the terrour of his mind which before he could not endure in a leſs degree. He prevents all means of future

ture comfort. He hath no reaſon to expect comfort from the Spirit of God whoſe motions he hath quenched, or I may ſay, affronted. And he may well expect (which I am afraid is the caſe of too many) to be quieted by a deluſion of the Devil, that all is well with him, inſtead of having a well grounded comfort from the holy Spirit of God. I know not what comfort he can have from Miniſters, who can only declare peace to the penitent, and how to judge him to be ſo, who in his laſt Affliction had nothing but a mock-Repentance, is one of the hardeſt things in the World. Or if there ſhould appear any hopes of ſincere Repentance, it may be as hard for the Sinner to believe himſelf a Penitent. He will reckon himſelf amongſt the Back-ſliders, in whom the *Soul* of God *can have no pleaſure*, and deſpair of being a Glorious Saint in Heaven, who can compare himſelf

to

to nothing but a *Dogg* that *returned to his Vomit*, and a Swine *to his wallowing in the mire.*

5. He is guilty of a moſt impious Contempt of God. He deals with God as if he were a Being neither to be feared or to be loved. If he thought him a being to be feared, he would not dally with him, as if he might be entertain'd and turn'd out of doors at the ſinners pleaſure; Adored one day and abuſed another. This is the caſe of the Sinner, and is not to be thought of without horrour. If he thought God a Being to be beloved and delighted in, he would not ſeek to him in his diſtreſs, and forſake him when he is out of it; for that ſuppoſeth that God is not to be delighted in, but only to be ſought to when a man knows not how to avoid it. He is likewiſe guilty of the greateſt Ingratitude. He received the greateſt kindneſs from God, He was delivered from the Fears of Death

and

and Hell, and he requites it as if God had done him the greateſt injury, for he offends and grieves him ever after. He is guilty of Perjury, for he vowed to God that if he recovered, he would live in obedience to him, and he lives as if he had made a *Covenant with death*, & an *Agreement with Hell.*

Inf. 3. If it be good for a young man to bear the Yoak of Affliction, this may be of good uſe to call him off from the love of the World, either the Profits or the Pleaſures of it, and to fix his mind upon the things of God and of Religion. Youth is an Age in which the World ſeems moſt deſirable, becauſe it is an Age of Activity, in which men can with eaſe and pleaſure mind the Concerns of it, and becauſe it is an Age in which men promiſe themſelves long enjoyments. Now, if in this Age ſickneſs is better than Health, and poverty bet-

ter

ter than Riches, and losses do men more good than Gains; methinks the young man should bid adieu to all eager pursuit of it, and fond expectations from it, and resolve that he will set his mind upon somewhat else which may be good for him, which is not bitter and irksome and dangerous, but pleasant delightful and safe for him, and that is Religion. This brings me to a second Acceptation of the word YOAKE, and that which I intend chiefly to insist upon: It doth often in the Scripture signifie Obedience to the Commands of God. In this sence *Moses* his Religion was called a *Yoake*, and the Gospel is called so by our Blessed Saviour: and in this sense many Expositors take the words. The Prophet was in hopes that the Affliction of this people would have a general influence upon their minds, and that it would not only tend to the Reforming of those who were

come

come to years of Knowledg and Underſtanding, but that young Perſons would likewiſe be brought to the practice of Religion by it. From the words in this ſenſe you may take theſe three uſeful Obſervations.

1. Religion is a YOKE.

2. Every man muſt bear this YOKE at ſome time or other.

3, Youth is a very fit and proper time for it. *It is good for a man that he bear the YOKE in his Youth.*

I have determined to apply my ſelf wholly to young Perſons, and ſhall therefore inſiſt only upon the laſt of theſe. In the proſecution of it I intend only to ſhew, in what reſpects it is good for a young man *to bear the YOKE*, to have his *mind ſubject to the Law of God*, and not to *the Law of Sin* and Vanity. To be in a readineſs to Obey all the Commands of God, as young *Samuel* was when he roſe from his Bed and ſaid, *Speak Lord for thy Servant heareth*,

And then to make some Inferences.

1. In what respects it is good for a man that he bear the YOKE in his youth; this is a hard taske, for if it be asked what *Advantage* hath the young man by being Religious, it must be answered in the *Apostles* Language *Much every way*. There is no man can think of any disadvantage that it is to him, or that any hurt can come to him by it. Insomuch that if there were not an exceeding Averseness in the nature of man to the practice of Religion, it might be altogether unnecessary to discourse on this Subject: But since there is that averseness, I will give some account of the Benefit of *Early Piety*, both in reference to the things of this World, and of that which is to come.

1. In reference to the things of this World. The Apostle saith *Godliness is Profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is*

and

and of that which is to come; and if that be granted, we are ſure that the ſooner Godlineſs begins, the greater the Profit is; I think it neceſſary to ſpeak of this, becauſe the great Objection againſt *Early Piety* is, that it hinders the young man from enjoying the good things of this World, and is therefore very unkind to him, becauſe he is but newly come into it, and hath the greateſt hopes of continuing longeſt in it. But this is a falſe and lying Suggeſtion, for no man enjoys ſo much good in the World as he that enjoys God in it. He that fears God in the firſt place, and obſerves the Rules of Religion in the management of the things of this world from the beginning of his poſſeſſing them, hath certainly the greateſt good by them. All men that own a God and a Providence muſt acknowledg this; for it were a very ſtrange and abſurd thing for any man to ſay, that God is

the Giver of all good things, and in that he is very good to his Creatures, but he doth not give good Rules and Orders about the uſe of them, but commands thoſe things to be done which takes away the pleaſant enjoyment of what he gives. This is as if it were better for a man to do what he pleaſe with the things of this World, and that it would conduce more to his Pleaſure and ſatisfaction, than to obſerve the Order and Command of God concerning them. But more particularly.

1. *Early Piety* is good for the preſervation of Life and Health. It preſerves the Body, as well as it ſaves the Soul. *Solomon* in the beginning of his *Proverbs* commends the practice of Religion to young men from the great Advantages that it brings to them in this life, amongſt which this is one, chap. 3. 12. *My ſon forget not my Law, but let thine heart keep my Commandments, for length of days and*

and long life and Peace ſhall they add to thee. It is not only Peace to the mind, but Health to the Body that is the conſequent of *Early Piety.* There are innumerable inſtances in the world of young mens deſtroying themſelves in the Prime of their Age, for want of it. There are many ſorrowful perſons, who may ſay to *Early Piety* concerning their young deceaſed Relations, as *Martha* ſaid to our Saviour concerning *Lazarus, If thou hadſt been here my Brother had not died.* If *Early Piety* had been here, if the young man who was my dear and near Relation had feared God, and lived a Pious and Vertuous Life, he might have been alive and enjoyed his health and the good things of this Life, but now he is gone having deſtroyed himſelf by vicious Courſes. If he had *Feared the Lord and departed from Evil,* it would have been health to his Navel and marrow to his Bones, but in-

inſtead of that he departed from God and feared no Evil, and now his Body is laid in the duſt.

When young men will not be perſwaded to that which may ſave their Souls, they preſently make haſte to deſtroy their Bodies. When they *refuſe inſtruction*, and all the Arguments that can be uſed to perſwade them to *Piety*, and their *Necks* are become as *an iron ſinew*, the next thing is to try whether their *fleſh* be as *Braſs*. When they have reſiſted the Reaſon of their own minds, in chooſing Vice rather than Vertue, they muſt then offer violence to the Conſtitutions of their own Bodies, and by to doing they quickly bring deſtruction upon themſelves.

Sometimes young men refuſing to ſerve God, they make their *Belly their God*, & that's a God that doth not preſerve life, but makes haſte to take it away. And when ſickneſs comes by *a ſurfeit* from the abundance of dainty things

things the man is extreamly offended at the goodneſs of God in making nature content with a little, and thoſe meats which are cheapeſt, to be moſt healthful to the Body. He did not regard the Man, the Soul I mean, and nothing could pleaſe him but over loading the Beaſt (the Body) till it dyed.

It may be that Drunkenneſs is the Executioner which he makes choice of, and that commonly gives a quick diſpatch. When the natural heat of his conſtitution is enraged by ſtrong Liquors, a Fever makes as much haſte to drink up his Spirits, as he did to pour in the Wine and Strong drink. Or it may be a *Dropſie* ſwells him till he is in intollerable Pain and Miſery. His Liver is reveng'd of his Throat, and turns all that might nouriſh him into ſuch a quantity of ill humours, that he becomes a Burden to himſelf, being overloaded with his own

Excrements. His delight was to empty Veſſels, and now he hath occaſion for the Tap to broach his belly, and let out the dregs, which his naſty Vice hath left there; but how ſeldome is it that this or any other remedy becomes Effectual.

It may be that his ſtrength of Conſtitution is not ſo quickly overcome, but by the continued aſſaults of his Intemperance it languiſheth by degrees. A *Conſumption* proves to be his Death, and becauſe it is a lingering Diſtemper, he hopes for his Recovery, and therefore neglects the uſe of Means. He hath ſome Reviving Intervals, and by them he hath ſuch hopes of Life, that he continues his Intemperance, and in this is cruel to himſelf: For when his affronted Nature is combating with the Diſeaſe, and gets but a little Advantage of it, he takes part with the Diſeaſe and ſtrengthens its Aſſaults, ſo that he

he becomes paſt Recovery; and when he finds himſelf in apparent danger of Death, as the wounded *Hart* runs from Thicket to Buſh, ſo the young man from City to Country, to try whether he can find any Relief, but alas! it proves in Vain; his Intemperance hath ſtuck a Dart in his Vitals, which cannot be taken out. Theſe are ſome of the Diſtempers which bring young men to their Death-Beds, where with ſorrowful Hearts they are often thinking, how good it had been for them, if they had borne the YOKE in their youth.

Whoredom is another Deſtructive Vice, which brings young men to their Graves. Thoſe that will not bear the YOKE and be reſtrain'd by the Duties of Religion; to gratifie their *Youthful Luſts*, they preſently run into the filthy Embraces of Poyſonous Women. And then what *Solomon* ſaith of the

ſimple young man, appears to be too true, *Prov.* 5. 9. They give their *Years unto the Cruell*, that is to Lewd Women. And it follows *ver.* 11. That they *mourn* becauſe their *Fleſh* and their *Bodies are Conſumed*. Nothing will ſatisfie ſome young men, but to degenerate into Beaſts, by laying aſide all Rules of Modeſty: But God hath put a Hooke in the jaws of Uncleanneſs, by a diſeaſe which is only incident to mankind, by which he may underſtand that his Maker requires him to bear a YOKE, and will not have him to Violate the Lawes of Chaſtity. Some are of Opinion that the filthy Diſeaſe, which now Reigns amongſt unclean Perſons, was not known in former days; which can only argue, that men are more Extravagantly and Unſatiably Vicious now than wicked men were in former times. But whether there was that Diſeaſe or no, I am ſure there were

were ways by which young men brought ſuddain Deſtruction upon themſelves. *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 2. 18. 19. *Her Houſe inclineth unto Death, and her paths unto the Dead; None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of Life*, and chap. 7. *ver.* 26. *She hath caſt down many wounded, yea many ſtrong men have been Slain by her.* There are almoſt innumerable Expreſſions in the Book of *Proverbs* to the ſame purpoſe. *Solomon* ſaith the young man *mourns at the Laſt*, and well he may to conſider what he hath done to his Soul and Body, when he perceives that they muſt part, how his precious Soul is ruined for which Chriſt died, and that his Body, which ſhould have been a Member of Chriſt, is dying, becauſe it was *The Member of a Harlot*, and *they were one Body*.

There are other ways by which young men haſten their Deaths for want

want of *Early Piety*. Their Extravagancies force them to leave their Native Country, and by the change of Meats and Climates, their names are brought back to their Relations in the *Dead Book*, of which there are innumerable Instances.

There are some whose Lives are Lost by their Pot-Valour. From Drunkenness comes *Duels*, and on a suddain they must rise up like *Abner* and *Joabs* young men, 2 *Sam.* 2. 14. to play, as they did who *caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his Sword in his fellows side, so they fell down together.* They only stay a little (if what I have heard be true) to pray to God to forgive them in the place where they are destroying each other. Before they came out to fight 'tis probable they were abusing the name of God by Oaths and Curses, and before they kill each other they mock him with their Prayers.

Thus

Thus the Devil to whoſe Power the young man commits his Soul, makes ſure of it, and finds many ways for the ſpeedy removal of it from the Body to his place of Torments.

I cannot give an account of all the paths which young men find that *lead to Death*, when they will not enter at firſt *into the path of Life*. I hope I have ſaid enough to ſhew the Benefit of *Early Piety* in this reſpect, that it doth not ſuffer young men to be their own Deſtroyers.

It is a diſmal thing to conſider the folly and madneſs of young men. There are none that are ſo much afraid to dye, and they have great reaſon to be ſo, and yet there are none that make ſo much haſte to throw away their Lives.

When by reaſon of ſtrong Conſtitutions, or leſſer Acts of Intemperance, the young man is not taken

taken away in the prime of his Years, yet it often happens that he labours all his days under the burden of those Distempers which are the effects of his Vice, and carries the sad Remembrance of the want of *Early Piety* to his grave. *His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which must lie down with him in the dust.* Job 20. 11.

There is another way by which *Early Piety* contributeth to the health of the Body, and that is, by keeping the Mind quiet and cheerful. Every one knows, that the Passions of the Mind have a great influence upon the Body. If a man hath lived a dissolute Life, he is greivously disquieted when he looks back upon his former Folly, especially when he hath impaired his Body or Estate. He knows not how to endure himself, when he thinks what condition he might have been in; but is in continual Anguish of

Mind

Mind, as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew afterwards. And if his Mind be not hardned in Wickedneſs, he can have nothing but Diſquietment to think what his Condition is in reference to another World. *Fear hath torment*, and when the Mind is unſetled and diſquieted, and a man is forced upon all occaſions to think that he is in a wrong way and hath alwayes been ſo; it may keep his Eyes waking, and hinder the Nouriſhment of his Body. It is the good man whoſe Mind is at quiet, that thrives and is healthful, becauſe he *Eats his Meat with a merry Heart, and drinks his Wine with Chearfulneſs: A merry Heart doth good like a Medicine; but a broken Spirit drieth up the Bones, Pro.* 17. 22. Where, by a broken Spirit we are not to underſtand a penitent Sinner, but the Impenitent, whoſe mind is tormented, becauſe of his miſerable Condition.

Early

Early Piety ſecures the health of the Body, as a conſequent of the health of the Soul. The preſervation of Health enſues, where there is care to prevent the Evills which hurt the Soul.

2. Early Piety is the beſt Security againſt Poverty. Poverty is an Evil which men are ſo much afraid of, that many deſtroy their Healths for fear of it, toiling beyond what their Strength and Spirits can bear, as if they were reſolved to make haſt to their Graves, to ſecure themſelves from the fear of Poverty. They kill themſelves for fear they ſhould not live. Others take indirect and wicked Courſes for fear of it. They Rob, and Steal, and become Beaſts of Prey, by which they ruine their Souls for fear of Poverty. They ſell themſelves (as *Ahab* did) to work wickedneſs, or I may ſay, they ſell their Souls for meat for

their

their Bodies: And they throw away their Lives likewiſe, by the neceſſary Execution of the Laws upon them. The fear of Poverty is ſo greivous, that they adventure the Gallowes, and will rather be under a juſt fear of that, than under an unneceſſary fear of Want and Poverty. I think it very proper for me to mention this, (which I might have done under the former Head) becauſe the Gallowes, in theſe caſes, doth alwayes complain of the want of Early Piety. If they had accepted of Gods Yoak, there had been no occaſion for the Executioners Halter. He that ſlighted Miniſters is turn'd a Preacher, and the Gallowes is his Pulpit, from which he Preaches to young men, and Exhortes them to Bear the Yoak in their Youth, from the Example of what he is ſuffering for want of it.

Since 'tis Poverty that is a great cauſe

eause of those Evils which befal Men, I may commend Early Piety as the best Security to keep men from it.

1*st*. Early Piety is the greatest Engagement of Gods providential Care, and gives a man the best Claim to the Promises of God, which relate to the good things of this Life. That *he will not suffer the Soul of the Righteous to famish. That there shall be no want to them that fear the Lord*; and such like promises which wee find very frequently in the Book of God, and frequently made good to men in the world, and acknowledged by them. If there be generall Promises to them that are good, surely they that begin soonest have the best Right to them. He that *giveth food to young Ravens that cry* to him because of their wants, surely will give food for young men that pray to him, and that delight in his service. Besides,

let

let us consider, what those young men are that bear the yoak, and from whence they are descended. Are they the children of Religious Parents? There is a particular Blessing for them. *The seed of the Righteous are blessed.* The wicked children of Religious men, whose sorrowfull Parents can not prevayl with them to bear the yoake, do doubtless fare the better for their sakes, as to temporall favours: How much rather then may the blessings of this life be expected, where the Parents are religious and the children likewise. Are they the children of wicked Parents, such as did never bear the yoak themselves, nor take any care that their children should; those certainly have no cause to doubt of the blessings of God, because they are Volunteers in his service. The Scripture tells us, that if the Son of a wicked man *seeth all his Fathers*

thers ſins which he hath done, and conſidereth and doth not ſuch like—— his righteouſneſs ſhall be upon him Ezek. 18. The Prophet is only anſwering an Objection, that the Son ſhould *bear the iniqnity of the Father*, and therefore only ſaith *the righteouſneſs of the Righteous ſhall be unto him*; by which it doth appear, that ſuch a Son hath a right to the Promiſes of God: But if the Prophet had been ſhewing the love of God to Sons that conſider and do not the ſins of their Fathers, we ſhould have had very high expreſsions of it. Tis true that the Promiſes which God made to good men in old time, when Sinners were brought to Obedience by temporall Rewards and Puniſhments, are not to be lookt upon as abſolute Engagements, by which God hath bound himſelf to make every good man rich in the world, but conditionall, with reſpect

ſpect to the Qualification of the Perſon, or the circumſtances of Times in which men live. Every good man is not fit to be rich: His temper is ſuch, that he would be apt to run into evil. And therefore ſome good men have been as thankful to God for a low eſtate, as others have been for riches and Honours. And ſometimes tis neceſsary that God ſhould ſend nationall Calamities which are Generall, by which good men may be brought low, as well as thoſe that are bad, and it tends greatly both to their goods, and the good of others that it ſhould be ſo.

The young man that bears the *Yoke*, may be ſure from the Promiſes of God, that he ſhall be Rich and great in the World, if it be good for him and others, that he ſhould be ſo. The Promiſes of Temporal Bleſſings are to be look'd upon as Rules of Providence, by which all

all men may conclude, that to be Religious is the ſureſt way to become Rich and Proſperous in the World.

2. As the young man who bears the *Yoke*, hath the beſt Title to Gods Promiſes, ſo he hath likewiſe a good Security from the proper and natural Event of things.

1. Becauſe *Early Piety* doth not admit of the Indulgence of thoſe vices which are expenſive, and tend to mens impoverſhing. The Extravagancies of Youth are commonly the cauſe of mens continued Poverty ever after. Sometimes they confound their Eſtates by thoſe exceſſes, which I have before mentioned. Thoſe that are gluttonous when they are young ſpend ſo much in coſtly diſhes, that if they live to be old they have nothing to eat. Who can tell the expence of Drunkenneſs? Or, who can tell the number of thoſe who drank Wine, till themſelves

themſelves and Families were glad to drink Water? How many young Gentlemen and others are there in the World, who by this Vice have ruin'd themſelves, till they have become the Scorn and Deriſion (not only of ſober and conſiderate men, but) of a meaner ſort of Perſons, Tapſters and Drawers, who give them great reſpect whilſt they are in their preſence, and then go down to laugh at them, eſpecially when they have paid the Reckoning. How many thouſands of young men have there been and are in the World, who might have been brave men if they had been Religiouſly and Vertuoſly diſpoſed, who ſpend their Eſtates to pleaſe Fools, and quickly call themſelves fools for doing it. They drink away their Riches and Liberties; Happy is the man at firſt that can do his Work, and in a ſhort time happy is the man that can get his Mony. The Tradeſman

man goes with his Friend before him to begg his Cuſtome, and becauſe of Drunkenneſs he is forced in a ſhort time to come with a Bailiff behind him that he may get his Debt: If theſe Debauchees Marry, what a miſerable Wife and Children are there to be ſeen? The Eſtate is gone by which the Family was plentifully provided for, and it may be the man is gone too, and now the ſorrowful Wife and Children have only ſuch Fare as *David* ſometimes had, *Teares* are their *Meat day and night.* What *Solomon* ſaith is very true *Prov.* 23, v 21. *The Drunkard and the Glutton ſhall come to Poverty.*

Another exſpenſive vice which brings men to Poverty is Whoredom. *Job* ſaith, Chap. 31. v 12. It is a ſin which *roots out* a mans *Encreaſe.* *Solomon* ſaith, that a lewd woman is *more bitter than Death,* becauſe of her *Nets and Snares,* her cunning

cunning ways to catch and entangle young men, who are not void of Riches, but only *void of Understanding*; this is more *bitter than Death*. Death may be ſweetned, and the thoughts of it made Pleaſant, but he that hath *Devoured* his *Living* with Harlots, he can never think of it without great Bitterneſs indeed.

There is an Ancient Proverb, *As the Palmer Worm to the Buds of the Pomegranates, ſo is an Harlot to a man.* The *Palmer-Worm* comes in the Spring, when the *Pomegranate* is in the Bud, and devours it, ſo that there is no hopes of Fruit from the Tree; in like-manner the Harlot devours Men in their Budding years, and deſtroyes the hopes of their coming to good. Theſe three Vices bring a Famine to the young man, as the Wormes brought a Famine to *Judah*, which the *Prophet Joel* ſpeaks of, Chap. 1. *ver.* 4. *That which the Palmer-*

Worm hath left, hath the Locuſt Eaten, and that which the Locuſt hath left, hath the Canker-Worm Eaten, and that which the Canker-Worm hath left, hath the Catterpillar Eaten. That which Gluttony hath left, Drunkenneſs devours, for after his Diſhes of Delicious Meates, there muſt come Bottles of Briſk Wines, and what Drunkenneſs hath left, Whoredom devours: when they have Eaten and Drunk *to the full*, Luſt is Enraged, and they then *Commit Adultrey, and Aſſemble in Harlots Houſes.*

There are likewiſe very Expenſive Vanities, as well as Debaucheries, by which young men are brought to Poverty; I will only mention two, *Pride* and *Gaming*. I need not tell you that Pride is prodigiouſly Expenſive, and I cannot tell you how many wayes it is ſo, both without doors and within. I can better tell why God ſuffers

fers it, which ſome may wonder at, ſince it is an Evil which God abominates. There is a great Providence in it, in that many Bellies are fed by that which Vain Perſons hang upon their Backs. I have heard that it was debated by *Queen Elizabeths* Council, whether ſumptuary Laws ſhould either be made or put in execution, by which every one ſhould be forced to go in a Habit ſuitable to his rank, and it was at length carried in the Negative, becauſe they determined, that it was beſt for the *Engliſh* Nation that Fooles ſhould go as fine as they pleaſe. And as there are many that are maintained by it, ſo it is a means by which Eſtates paſs into the hands of thoſe, that know how to make a better uſe of them. This may be given as an account why God permits it, but I know of no account which any can give why they practice it; & yet to what exceſs doth it ſwell? If we could ask vain

Perſons how much they could be content to lay out upon their backs, or for gaudy Furniture in their Houſes, they either could not give an anſwer, or would be aſhamed to do it. I am ſure there is nothing more ordinary, than for Proud Perſons to ruine themſelves by it, as if they dreſt themſelves fine againſt they ſhould run away, and furniſht their houſes very ſumptuously againſt the time of their going to a Jayl. Thoſe that converſe with Priſoners, and treat with their Creditors, may think the Hoſpital of *Bethlehem* fitter than a Priſon for very many that come thither. I am ſure likewiſe, that there are a great many of ſuch haughty Spirits in Perſons of an inferiour Rank, that it may very properly be ſaid, they ruine themſelves to be ridiculous; And it coſts them all, and ſometimes more than they are worth, to be ſcorn'd and hated of all that know them. This

This expenſive Vanity is as much, or rather more to be charged upon young Women, than upon young Men. The Scripture ſpeaks particularly of the *Pride of Women*, becauſe it is a Folly which the weakneſs of their Sex doth expoſe them to. Their minds are ſo ſet upon it, that they ſpend the greateſt part of their time in making Ornaments for their Bodies. The *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is to God of great Price*, they do not value, but ſuch *Tinckling Ornaments* as the Prophet ſpeaks of, *Eſa* 3. 18. which coſt their Fathers a great Price. I wiſh all young Perſons of the Female Sex would often read that Chapter, that they may ſee how *Haughty the Daughters of Zion* were: How they gave their minds to nothing but dreſſing of themſelves, that they might go abroad with *ſtretched-out Necks*, &c. till the angry God undreſt them, by ta-

king away their Ornaments, *their Caules, and their round Tires like the Moon, the Chains, and the Bracelets*, &c. It is worth their obſerving, how God takes an Account of all their gayeties of Pride (which doubtleſs they, as ours do, called nothing but Decency) the particulars being here ſet down in Holy Writ. It would trouble young Women, if when they go abroad their Finery ſhould not be taken notice of; But it may trouble them much more to think, that God takes notice of them. They think they are diſcharged when the Exchange-bill is paid; but it appears by this Chapter, that God who *reſiſts the Proud* will call them to Account, and that he hath likewiſe a Bill of Particulars. At the 25th. *verſe*, they may find what an alteration God makes, how their *ſweet ſmells* are *turned into a Stench, inſtead of a Girdle a Rent, and in-*

ſtead

ſtead of well-ſet Hair Baldneſs, and inſtead of a Stomacher a girding of Sackcloth, and Burning inſtead of Beauty. Thus God dealt by the *Haughty Daughters* in the City of *Jeruſalem*, and what can Haughty young Women in other Cities and places expect, but that God who takes notice of all their Pride (their very Pins are mentioned by the Prophet) ſhould puniſh them with temporal Judgments as he did them, or leave them to the Judgment of the great day. Their fond flattering Lovers may call them Angels, but I am ſure their *being lifted up with Pride*, ſhewes them to be like the lapſed Angels, and they may therefore well expect to *fall into the Condemnation of the Devil.* But I muſt not forget that I am not ſpeaking of the Pride of Women, as deſtructive to their Souls, but to their Purſes, which woful Experience proves to be very true,

and yet there is little or no care taken to prevent it. Pride hath gotten the upper hand, it domineers and makes Lawes to be obſerved. *Follow the Faſhions or go out of the World.* Whatever men ſuffer, money muſt be had for flanting Apparell and Gorgeous Attire. And it is no wonder if the Children plead for it, when they have the Examples of the Aged. The Apoſtle, *Titus* 2. 4. requires that Aged Women ſhould *teach young Women to be ſober—diſcreet*, &c. But now the Aged Women teach the young ones to be Proud and Laviſh, and ſomtimes the Mother ſhews the Daughter how to ruin her Husband. Thus doth Pride bring Poverty, where *Early Piety* doth not prevent it. *A mans Pride ſhall bring him low*, Prov. 29. 23.

There is another Expenſive Vanity by which young Perſons come to Poverty, and that is exceſſive

ceſsive Gaming. There are ſome Games which as they are not forbidden by God, and therefore are not unlawfull, ſo they are very Pleaſant and Uſefull for the Recreation of young Perſons. But there are a great many, who think there is no Sport but to undoe, or be undone. They muſt Play at that rate which muſt make ſome of the Company go away with ſorrowfull hearts, which is exceeding fooliſh and diſingenuous, eſpecially conſidering that thoſe who practiſe it, pretend a Love to the Perſon with whom they Game, and a delight in their Society.

But I will break off from this, that I may not forget a new expenſive Vanity, which young men are catcht by, and that is the throwing away of their Money at *Lotteries*. A great Convenience for fools that know not what to

do with their Money, becauſe there they may quickly be rid of it. Tis like a Mine to ſome men, with which they are blown up in a moment. Thoſe that have the benefit of them may quickly get great Eſtates, if they can but command their Paſsion ſo as not to laugh at their Cuſtomers. Thoſe that throw away their money at *Lotteries*, are a ſort of the moſt non-ſenſicall men in the World, and Non-ſence is fitteſt to deſcribe them. They are Covetous Prodigalls, who are reſolv'd to try if they can be enriched by that, which is maintain'd only by making men poor. It is a Folly ſo unaccountable, and yet ſo bewitching, that every one wiſhes at firſt his friend may be a Looſer by it, that he may not frequent it to his utter undoing. It is a fooliſh Extravagancy, by which men throw away their ſubſtance, and

and ſome men their Wives and Children, as if it were indifferent to them, whether they ſubſiſted or periſhed for want of Neceſſaries.

Having ſhewed what brings young men to Poverty, I may in the next place, deſire them to conſider their Unhappineſs, which is far greater than other mens, when Poverty comes upon them. Some are Gods poor, and are therefore the greateſt Objects of *Pity*; Sickneſs or unexpected Loſſes have brought them to want; but Extravagants may be called the Devils Poor. They are become Poor, by ſerving a Maſter who employes his ſervants in only deſtroying themſelves. They are not Poor by what they have Loſt, but by what they have thrown away. How deſpicable are ſuch men, and how unpitied is their Poverty. He that by Gluttony or Drunkenneſs hath

left

left his own Parlour, can ſcarcely be welcome to another mans Kitchen. He is in *Jobs* condition as to his Poverty, though not as to his Piety or Patience. *They that are younger than* he, *have* him *in deriſion.* The Children, *whoſe Fathers* were *diſdained* by him, make him *their Song and their by-Word.* He that might have been honoured by the Maſter, is become the ſcorn of ſervants. When Prodigals have ſpent their *Eſtates* in *riotous living*, they may keep *with the ſwine*, becauſe there are no men that care for their company. When a mans Encreaſe is rooted out by Lewd Women, what will he do for a Subſiſtence? *Solomon* ſaith, *By means of a Whoriſh Woman, a man is brought to a piece of Bread*, Prov. 6. 26. But 'tis a queſtion, whether the Whoriſh Woman, when ſhee hath ruin'd him, will give him *a piece of Bread*; And it is a queſtion, whether any other will relieve him

him, if they know by what means Poverty is come upon him. Thoſe who have brought themſelves low by being too high (I mean by Pride and Haughtineſs) are very miſerable. They were hated before, and now they are deſpiſed. They thought nothing was good enough for them, and now others think there's nothing bad enough. When the proud man falls, there are *none that will help him up*, but every one is ready to rejoyce as at the fall of a *Lucifer*; one that ſhined very bright, as if he would dazzle the eyes of all Spectators, and is become (if I may ſo ſay) a fallen Star that is put out, and ſhines no longer. Their Poverty is no leſs Unpityed, who have thrown away their Eſtates by Games and Lotteries. Who can pity him that might have kept his Money, and would not? Who can not ſo much as pretend to the craving of any Luſt as others do, but he ruined

ruined himself only by an itching Folly, which no man can give any account of.

Thus I have shewed what it is that brings men to Poverty, and I have spent the more time upon it, because I think I cannot speak too much to expose the destructive Vices by which young men are utterly ruin'd. I hope I need not tell you, that *Early Piety* prevents all these. It makes men *sober and vigilant*, by which they avoid the danger of the roaring Lyon, who *seeks to devour* the Substance of men in this world, as well as their Souls in the world to come. *The Grace of God* hath taught the young man *to live soberly, godly, and righteously in the world*; and by that means he is otherwise engaged, than to yeild to destructive Vices and Vanities. Where *Early Piety* is, the young man *pleaseth God*, and therefore he shall *escape* from the woman *who is more bitter than Death*, when

Sinners

Sinners are taken by her; that is, ſuch as did not bear the *Yoke* in their youth. *Early Piety* doth not ſuffer men to be ſo fooliſh, as to throw away their Money by *Games* and *Lotteries*. *I Wiſdome dwell with Prudence*, *Prov.* 8. 12. We know very well, that young men of themſelves are moſt apt to be in love with thoſe Expenſive Follies, becauſe of the weakneſs and inadvertency that attend that Age, but *Early Piety* (as *Solomon* ſaith *Prov.* 1. 4.) *gives Subtilty to the Simple, and to the young man Knowledg and Diſcretion*, and that I am ſure Extravagant Gameſters are void of. Thus I have ſhewed, that *Early Piety* is good againſt Poverty, as it ſecures a man from thoſe Extravagancies, which bring Ruine and Deſtruction.

3. *Early Piety* is good for a mans Reputation: It procures him great Honour, as well as Health and Riches

ches. I might have mentioned this as a third Reaſon, why *Early Piety* is the ſureſt way to get Riches, becauſe it gives the young man Credit in the World: Every one is willing to trade with him, becauſe they ſee that he begins right, and is like to be a great man in the World; and they delight to deal with him who are Ingenuous, becauſe 'tis pleaſant to ſee a hopeful young man thrive and proſper. Thoſe young men that are Vicious, will chooſe rather to trade with him, than with thoſe that are their Companions. They may *think it ſtrange that* he doth *not run with them into the ſame Exceſs of Riot*; but their Conſciences will not ſuffer them to think, that it is ill in him, or blameworthy. When the Vicious young man ſees how he that is Vertuous declines his ways, he cannot but think with himſelf, how happy he is like to be in the World; he will

'be a Man when I shall be a Beg-
'gar. He will be in great repute
'when I shall be in a Jayl. He
ſaith concerning him in the Lan-
guage of *John* the *Baptiſt*, *He muſt Encreaſe, but I muſt Decreaſe.* It is very remarkable, how the Debaucht young man eſteems of him that is Sober, however he is baſely Enſlaved to a contrary Humour; And how the Pious & ſober young man abhors the ways of him that is debaucht. Their Judgments meet and agree, though their Practices cannot. They both know, that Piety *promotes men*, and that it *brings them to Honour.* Prov. 4. 8.

But I am loath it ſhould be thought that *Early Piety* doth only give men Credit in a Shop, or upon the Exchange: It being of a far larger Extent. A Pious and Vertuous young Man is Valued and Delighted in by all that know him,

him. He is only an Accidental Occaſion of Sorrow to them, that are related to young Perſons that refuſe the *Yoke*, and live Vicious and Diſſolute Lives. Men of Honour and Reputation will take ſpecial notice of ſuch as are Vertuous, when it may be they paſs by others who have more Riches, becauſe they know that Vertue is more to be Valued, and moſt of all in a young man. When *David* went out to fight againſt the great *Goliah*, *Saul* was mightily inquiſitive concerning him becauſe he was ſo young, 1 *Sam.* 17. 55. 56. *He ſaid to* Abner, *whoſe Son is this youth?* And becauſe *Abner* could not tell him, he was unſatisfied and ſaid, *Enquire whoſe Son this Stripling is.* Where Vertue is diſcovered in thoſe that are young, it brings great Honour both to themſelves, and likewiſe to their Parents. That Woman who brought

forth

forth her Children well Educated, was more to be honoured than ſhe that had only her Houſe well furniſhed.

Early Piety is ſo highly Valued, that we cannot imagine, how any ſhould paſs by a Vertuous young man, but either he muſt ſhew outward Reſpect to him, or at leaſt have a great Eſteem for him in his thoughts.

If Parents ſee him, eſpecially ſuch as have bad Children, they cannot but ſay in their Hearts, as the Woman (who poſſibly might be an unhappy Mother) ſaid to our Saviour, *Luke* 11. 28. *Bleſſed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou haſt ſucked.* Other Children do oft-times become a dreadful torment to their Parents. They expected their Children ſhould be their greateſt Comforts, and they prove their greateſt Croſſes. The Children deprive their Parents of

their

their Beings, from whom they had their own. Vice and Wickedneſs *bereaves* the Father of his Son, or at leaſt of all Comfort from him, and that brings *His gray Haires with ſorrow to the Grave*, and ſometimes doth not ſuffer him to live ſo long. The Mother endured dreadful Pain that her Womb might be delivered of him, and *She ſoon forgat her Pain, for joy that a man was born into the World.* But he is now become a *heavineſs* to her heart, which ſhe cannot forget, or be delivered from. He was the delight of her Eye, but is become a Thorn in it: A cruel *Nero* that deſtroyes his own Mother, and puts her to a lingering Death, by adding more and more grief to her every day, till ſhe can hold out no longer. The *Souldanians* in one reſpect, are more kind to their Aged Parents, by expoſing them to ſuddain Death, which they do in pity to them.

That

That Child who is a Son or a Daughter of *Belial*, who is without *Yoke, is a Grief to the Father, and a Bitterneſs to her that bare them*: Such Bitterneſs as takes away the Sweetneſs of their Enjoyments in this World, and at length Life it ſelf. The Lives of Parents are too often *bound up* in the Welfare of their Children, and therefore when they Miſcarry and become Vicious, the Parent dyes. But a young Man that is Religiouſly diſpoſed, is the Joy and Comfort of his Parents. *The Father of the Righteous ſhall greatly Rejoyce, and he that begetteth a Wiſe Child ſhall have Joy of him. Thy Father and thy Mother ſhall be Glad, and ſhe that bare thee ſhall Rejoyce*, Prov. 23. 25. The Father hath a ſingle Joy, and it is very great; but the Tender Mother hath double Joy: *Thy Mother ſhall be Glad, and ſhe that bare thee ſhall Rejoyce.* The greateſt

teſt danger that ſuch Parents are in, is, leaſt they ſhould Love their Earthly Son ſo well, as to forget their Heavenly Father, which they muſt have a care of. Other Children are oft-times ſo Unnatural, as to Deſpiſe their Parents when Age comes, inſomuch that they care not for ſeeing of them, nor do they regard what they ſay to them. *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 23. 22. *Hearken to thy Father that Begat thee, and Deſpiſe not thy Mother when ſhe is Old*; which ſuppoſeth, that there are ſuch Undutiful and Unnatural Children, that can Slight their Parents moſt, when there is the greateſt Reverence due to them. Sometimes it happens, that the Poverty of Aged Parents is the cauſe of their wicked Children deſpiſing of them, and it may be that Poverty was occaſioned, by their too great kindneſs to them, beyond what their Ability could afford. By reaſon of their too great

great Indulgence, they are forced to become Beggars to their Children and cannot get an Almes of them: But Grief and Poverty, which their Children would not prevent, puts an end to their ſorrowful days. And when they are Dead, it may well be expected, that the Condition of thoſe Children ſhould be miſerable ever after. They have oftimes Curſe upon Curſe, and would give ten thouſand Worlds that they had their Parents again to nouriſh and ſupport, whom they cannot now ſo much as ask forgiveneſs. If they are Parents themſelves, every Croſs which they have from their own Children, raiſeth the Ghoſt of their own Father or Mother, or both, to walk in their Conſciences to their unſpeakable Grief and Terrour. But a Son that bears the *Yoke, hearkens to his Father*, and ſhews great Reverence to *his Mother, when they are Old*. Religious Sons and Daughters

ters are like *Jacobs* Children, taking care for Proviſion for their Poor Aged Father, and if need be for the whole Family; and when he dies they ſhew their Honour and Obedience to him upon his Death-Bed, liſtning to the words of his dying Lipps, as *Jacobs* Children did: Neither does their Love end there, but they Mourn and Lament for him. *Joſeph* who was become a Lord, *Fell upon his poor dead Fathers face, and wept upon him, and Kiſſed him; And commanded his Servants the Phyſicians to Embalme him,* and gave him a very Honourable Burial. Religion doth not ſuffer Children to Deſpiſe their Parents, whatever befalls them, but to Honour them; and in ſo doing they procure great Honour to themſelves. As *Joſeph* is and will be Renowned to the end of the World, for his Love and Duty to his Parent; ſo thoſe Children that follow ſuch Examples, are Be-

loved

beloved, and honoured whilſt they live, and their memories after they are dead, ſo long as there is any mention made of them.

Thus I have ſhewed that Early Piety brings Honour, and Reputation to thoſe that are in the relation of Children, and I hope if I have ſeemed to digreſs, by ſhewing the neceſſity of Obedience to Parents, as well as the Reputation of it, which is the thing I propounded, the Uſefulneſs of it will excuſe me.

If the young man that beares the *Yoke* be in the Relation of a Servant, he has likewiſe a very great Eſteem. In this Age Maſters and Miſtriſſes complain, that Servants are the Plague of the Nation; that they are like *Pharaoh's* Caterpillars, that come to them only to eat up Pleaſant things, or like the Frogs that make an ugly noiſe in the houſe but do no Work. And that which makes their caſe to be worſt of

all, they know not when the Plague will be at an end, because there are such swarms both in City and Country. Some Servants are secret Thieves and Robbers; their Masters are ruin'd, and they know not by whom: And they are to be sure the worst sort of Robbers. Other Thieves run away, but these stay to be maintain'd, and to have Meat, Drink, and Money. Some Servants are so Vicious and Profane, that they quickly infect the whole house; the Master had need shut up his Children; and other Masters are afraid their Children and Servants should be infected likewise. Complaints are so great, that there is no quietness till the Servant be gone, and I need not tell you that he carries a lasting Disgrace with him, which it may be causeth him to fall into the gang of such Thieves, as make haste to the Gallows. How highly then must a

Vertuous

Vertuous Servant needs be valued. The Maſter is like *Potiphar*, who needs not trouble himſelf ſo much as to know *What is in his houſe*, ſo long as he hath a *Joſeph* in it, who is Faithful and Diligent. Such a Servant is a great Bleſſing to the Family. The Maſter and Miſtriſs are enriched, the Children and the other Servants have a good Example, and it may be good Counſel and Advice too, which they are the more apt to liſten to, becauſe it is rare, and ſeldom heard from a Servant. How loath is the Maſter to part with ſuch a Servant; when his time is expir'd, he is ready to ſay to him as *Laban* ſaid to his Servant *Jacob*, Gen. 30. 27. *I pray thee if I have found Favour in thine Eyes tarry; for I have Learned by Experience that the Lord hath Bleſſed me for thy ſake.* He is ſo loath to part with him, that if he hath a Daughter fit to be given in Marriage, he

doth not think he can give her too great a Portion with him, of whose *Early Piety* to God, and therefore Faithfulness to him, he hath had so much Experience: He is therefore very willing there should be a change of Relation to him, and that he who hath been a Faithful Servant, should in this sense *become his Son at the last.* The Esteem and Reputation that a Vertuous Servant hath, is not to be expresst, nor the several Advantages which he hath.

If the young man hath a more Liberal Education, and be one who is disposed to the attainment of Learning, his Industry and Ingenuity is presently dispersed from the School: His Master accounts him his Credit and Reputation, and his Example is a spur to other Children, whose Parents are thereby made glad. When he is admitted in the University, he quickly gains

the Reputation of the College, and in a ſhort time the whole Univerſity hearing of his Fame do preſently deſire to know his Face, that they may Honour him whereſoever they ſee him; and much more, becauſe it is not often that he goes abroad. When he hath Commenc'd, he hath commonly choice of Preferments. The Country thinks long for him, and the Univerſity is loath to part with him: But whereſoever he is *A good Name* keeps him Company.

It may not be altogether improper for me, to ſpeak of thoſe Vertuous young men who are Honourably deſcended. Great Families are commonly Ruin'd or Supported, by the Vice or Vertue of one young Gentleman of Honourable Birth. Inſomuch that it is great pitty, there is not ſome ſevere Law, by which thoſe Debaucht Miſcreants, who have ruined

themſelves, ſhould be kept from coming neer, I had almoſt ſaid, from breathing in the Air where the Children of perſons of Honour are Born and Educated. Who can expreſs the Miſchief that is done by one young man who is Noble (not as the *Bæreans* were, *Act.* 17. 11. in that *they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the Scriptures daily*, but only) by deſcent from his Earthly Parents? What Drunkenneſs? what Whoredoms? nay, what Murders will not ſuch a Perſon ſometimes be guilty of, till his Eſtate and Family be ruin'd, by the Expence of committing Wickedneſs? What Devils in the ſhape of men, and in his Livery, are the Servants of ſuch a one? They appear as Proud in that they can ſerve the Devil by all manner of Lewdneſs, and be uncontroul'd, as that they wait upon their Lord. What a Terror is it

to

to the Towns round about, when such a great Person goes to his Country Seat? How dismally are honest men afraid for their Sons and for their Daughters, for fear that Drunkenness should destroy the one, and Whoredom the other? How many poor Tradesmen are ruined Soul and Body, by the intemperance which they scarcely knew how to avoid? The kindness of sottish Servants do often make sorrowful Widdows, and Fatherless Children. There is a greater Mischief than all these. Such persons have commonly the Patronage of many Ecclesiastical Promotions, and by that means the Church is infested with such Ministers, as are only fit to make Athiests, and not Proselytes to Religion: Such as may offend God as much as they please, and cast Contempt upon Religion, so they do not offend or disoblige their Patrons.

The Devil may well be called a Prince, when such great men do him homage, and by all waies advance his Kingdom. In the mean while, what Reproach and Dishonour doth such a Person bring upon himself and Family? What Hypocrites doth he make men, in that they shew respect to him, as if they loved him, when they have a secret loathing of him in their Hearts? How do they wellcome his Approach, when it may be they are afraid of him, as of a devouring Lyon, and are never at quiet till he and his lewd Retinue are gone. And when he dies, his Greatness serv'd for no other end, but to make his memory stink above the earth, and men rejoyce that he is stinking under it.

All these Mischeifs, and the Reproach which is the concomitant and consequent of them, are for want of *Early Piety* in those of honorable Descent. But

But on the other hand, where ſuch a Perſon hath a Religious Education and takes it; Who can expreſs the Honour and Renown that he hath? His Relations rejoyce more in him, than in all the whole Family beſides. His *Early Piety* ſpreads abroad, and is as a ſweet Perfume. His name is as precious Oyntment. He is ſoon admitted into the favour of his Prince, and places of great Truſt are conferr'd upon him. The Church is advanc'd by him, for none but men of worth receive Preferments from him. He is the Admiration of all the Worthy Gentry, and their diſcourſe upon all occaſions ſpreads his Fame. And for the Common ſort, they are in danger of committing Idolatry, by giving greater honour to him than is due to a Created Being. They ſay to him as the Queen of *Sheba* ſaid to *Solomon*, *Happy are thy men, and*

happy are thy Servants that ſtand before thee; and glad they are if they can obtain the Honour, to have their Sons or Daughters admitted to wait upon him: How much more happy is that Family, to which by Marriage he becomes related? There are ſome inſtances in this Age, and have been in former, of one young man Honourably deſcended, whoſe *Early Piety* and *Vertue*, have repair'd the Ruines which have been made in his Family for want of it; and what a laſting Reputation muſt this be to his Name and Memory?

Thus I have endeavoured to ſhew, that *Early Piety* is good for a man, in reference to all thoſe preſent Advantages, which men are greedy of in this Life. It is the beſt Security that any one can have of Health, Riches, and Honours. But all theſe are little things in compariſon of other

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Benefits and Advantages: those which relate to the *Immortal Soul*, and its Eternity in another State. What if the young man should never enjoy a days Health whilst he lives in this World? What if he should, as it is said in *Job*, be *Chastned with pain upon his bed* all his days, *and the multitude of his bones with strong Pain*, yet this is nothing in comparison of the inward joy and pleasure of a Religious Mind; and it is less than nothing in comparison of the Eternal Joy and Happiness of another State. What if he should be a poor *Lazarus* all his days, yet he is *Rich in Faith*, he is *Rich towards God*; and therefore as our Saviour saith, *I have meat to eat which you know not of*; so he hath an Estate to live upon which others know not of, that which (though it doth not bring in great plenty of Provision, yet) maketh the meanest Fare, to be sweet and

and to be received with Pleaſure, and Thanksgiving. What if he be reproacht and ſlighted in the World, yet he is honoured of God: It is but as if a great Courtier, who is in Favour with his Prince, ſhould be ſcorn'd by a mean man that doth not know him.

If the worth of a young man that bears the *Yoke*, how *Glorious* he is *within*, and how he is beloved of God, could be known; he would be Honoured above all others in the world, as one that is in the higheſt form of Chriſtianity, and one of the greateſt Proficients in it. If all theſe Afflictions befall a man that feared God betimes, yet his *Early Piety* is not the Cauſe of them, but it is a means to make him patient under them. Or if we could ſuppoſe that outward troubles ſhould be the conſequent of *Early Piety*, as it was in the time of the Churches perſecution, yet this never made any ſay

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that it had been better for them, if they had not begun to be Religious ſo ſoon, but had ſtay'd longer in hopes that the trouble and miſery that followed it, would have been at an end. The Joy and Comfort that *Early Piety* brings to the mind, will appear ſomewhat more at large under another head of diſcourſe, I ſhall therefore proceed to ſhew the Advantages which young men have by bearing the *Toke*, in reference to their Spiritual Concerns.

I. It is good to prevent Atheiſm, or I may ſay, it is the beſt Antidote againſt that Poyſon; the beſt Preſervative from that ſhort-liv'd Folly and Madneſs. It muſt needs be very ſtrange to all conſiderate men, that there ſhould be an Athieſt, and eſpecially where the Goſpel is preached, by which *Life and Immortality is brought to light*. If he was a fool who ſaid in *Davids* time

time *There is no God*, what fools are they who live in those days after the Son of *David* is come into the World, and fulfilled the prophecies which were concerning him. We wonder at the *Jews*, that they own not Christ to be the *Messias*, since he came at that time when their Forefathers said, *Art thou he, or shall we look for another?* And there hath come no other, although *Sixteen-hundred* years are past and gone. How much more are they to be wondred at, who neither believe the Old *Testament* nor the New. Men of other Religions believe so much of the Gospel, as to be convinc'd that there is a God, although they had no other evidence. The *Mahometans* believe that Christ was in the World, and that he was a great *Prophet* sent from God, and did greater Miracles than any other *Prophet*; not excepting their *Mahomet* himself. That he was born

born of a Virgin, who they say conceived him by the ſmell of a Roſe: That *Mahomet* was the Comforter whom he promiſed ſhould come into the World. They bow at the Name of Jeſus. The late Ambaſſador from *Morocco* ſeeing a Picture made to Repreſent our Saviour, bowed to the ground, that he might ſhew the Reverence he had for him, as being a great Prophet.

The *Jews* acknowledg that Chriſt was in the World, and that he had power from God to do Miracles, till he called himſelf the Son of God. And yet in our dayes there are ſome brought up in the Chriſtian Religion, who are ſo inconſiderative of the arguments of Chriſtianity, as to deny that there is a God, or another Life after this; of which I cannot give or imagine a greater Cauſe, than the want of *Early Piety*. I cannot conceive

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that any man can be an Atheiſt who heartily embraced Religion when he was young. Atheiſm is not more the Cauſe of wickedneſs, than it is the Effect of it. Nay it is not ſo proper to ſay, that men are Wicked becauſe they are Atheiſts, as to ſay that they are Atheiſts becauſe they are, and have been wicked. They have made themſelves liable to eternal puniſhment if there be a God, and therefore they endeavour to ſupport themſelves as well as they can, with a Belief that there is none, and that they ſhall dye like Beaſts as they lived. I know very well, that Atheiſm is the Cauſe of the moſt notorious wickedneſs; for when men have thrown off the Belief of a God, what lewdneſs will they not be guilty of? But it is not the Original cauſe. It is hard to conceive, that young men can at firſt ſo deſpiſe the natural dread of God that is

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in the minds of all that come into the World; or can think that all that they hear from the beſt men, and from moſt of them that are bad, hath nothing at all in it; but they think it time enough to ſerve God, ſince there is hopes of being accepted of him at any time upon Repentance, and that in the mean time Religion is a *Yoke* of Reſtraint to their youthful Luſts and Pleaſures, to which their corrupt Natures do exceedingly incline them. And after they have contracted Guilt and Fear by thoſe vain hopes, and by degrees have been guilty of greater contempt of God than at firſt they intended, then they think it becomes their concern to be in the forlorn hope of thoſe who ſay *There is no God.* I do not think there ever was an Athieſt who was Religious when he was young. It is not to be conceived, that thoſe who ſavour the things of God at firſt

first, should afterwards question the foundation of all Religion. I know there have been some, who by strong Temptations and ill Examples have *Forsaken their first Love*, & by degrees have become loose and then wicked in their Practices, but still they did not doubt of the Being of a God, but only hoped for an after-Reconciliation. There was not many years since a remarkable Instance of one who was executed for Robbery, and I am the more willing to mention it, because it may tend to the good of young men, to their being more careful to bear the *Yoke* and not to leave it off. He said that when he was young he had a very great relish of Religion, that he went to the house of God with Gladness, and heard the Word of God with Delight. That Religion had such an influence upon his mind, that he was afraid to commit a secret sin, or to

neglect

neglect his ſecret Devotion: But yet afterwards he became Idle and Remiſs by reaſon of ill Examples: That he had too much delight in Gaming, which occaſioned the loſs of his Money, and that for his ſupply of that, he betook himſelf to the *High-way*; but after he came into Priſon and expected his *Execution*, he was ſo far from being an Athieſt, that for the ſpace of fourteen days and nights, he thought his Soul endured the Torments of Hell. His former regard to Religion was ſo quick and lively in his mind, that he remembred the paſſages in Sermons which affected him, and the very place and poſture that he was in at that time, though (I think) above twenty years had paſſed; and likewiſe how careful he was of his mind in ſecret. That after this he ſhould forſake God, was the Torment of his Soul, but he could never make

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the leaſt doubt of the departing of his Soul to an *Eternal* State. After the fourteen days were ſpent in ſtrong Cries to God to have mercy upon him, it pleaſed God to reſtore to him *the Joy of Salvation*, and there was great hopes, that he was *Renewed* again by *the Spirit* of God, and died in a ſafe and happy condition. If it had not been for the Senſe which he had of Religion in his youth, 'tis poſſible that he might have made Atheiſm his pitiful Refuge: And I can but ſay *tis poſſible*, for by what I have obſerved by converſe with condemned Malefactors, I have reaſon to conclude, that there are very few, if any, that die Atheiſts, howſoever they lived.

That *Early Piety* is good to prevent Atheiſm, ſhould be of great force to perſwade the young man to bear the *Yoke*: Eſpecially conſidering that he lives in a vicious and debaucht

baucht Age, in which he is in great danger of it. Atheiſm is very dreadful, if we conſider what Evil the Atheiſt deſires to others, as well as that which he brings upon himſelf; and all for the ſake of his uneaſy, tormenting Luſts and Pleaſures. He that wiſhes the Sun were thrown out of the Firmament, that the earth were thrown into the Sea, and all the World were in a Flame, doth not wiſh ſo much hurt, as he that wiſhes there were no God. He hopes that all who like *David* have meditated on the Works of God, that have delighted in his word, to obey the commands of it, and have comforted themſelves by a belief of the promiſes of it, will be cheated; and that the Scriptures which men ſo much reverence, are nothing but lies and falſhood. In ſhort, he hopes that all the Martyrs, and all others who died in the Faith, were fools; and that all who deny themſelves

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any pleasures, and regard any thing of Religion, are guilty of Folly and Madness; and that he is the only wise man who begins soonest to be vicious, and continues so till the last: That it is the excellency of a man to live and dye like a Beast.

I would have the young man to consider likewise, what a dreadful condition Atheism brings men into. Atheists say, that Religion is a Cheat, but Atheism is the greatest of all Cheats, and leaves men in a fearful condition. If men that have practised Religion, should so often when they are dying declare, that they think there is no God, (which I never heard from any) and that they have lost their hopes; as those who have lived Atheists when they dye, declare that they believe a God, and are afraid of him; Atheists might have somwhat to say for themselves. I must con-

confeſs, that when I have viſited ſick perſons, whoſe lives have been vicious and debaucht, I have examined them concerning the firſt principle of Religion, and whether they thought there was a God, when they were guilty of baſe and wicked actions; but I never met with any but were very ſenſible of a ſoul that muſt depart when the body dies. And therefore inſtead of ſpending any time in urging the force of Arguments which prove a God, they have earneſtly deſired that I ſhould ſpend my time with them in earneſt Prayers to God for them, and in directing them what they ſhould do that they might be ſaved, who had done ſo much to deſtroy their own ſouls, that they had little hopes of Salvation.

There was one very remarkable inſtance of a Perſon who ſaid he had been an Atheiſt (although part

part of what he ſaid was incon-
ſiſtent with Atheiſm) for ſome
time, whom I viſited upon his
Death-Bed, whoſe words I will (as
well as my memory ſerves me) relate
to you; "I have been (ſaid he) one
"of the wickedeſt men in the World
"for Drunkenneſs and Whoredom,
"and Swearing, and all that was
"naught. I did for ſome time be-
"lieve that there was no God. I
"thought there was no Hell, but
"the torment of a mans Conſcience
"when he did a baſe action, which
"I continually felt the pain of: Af-
"terwards as I was paſſing by the
"Church upon the Lords day in my
"way to a Whore-Houſe, I ſaw the
"Church was crowded, and I had a
"deſire to look in and ſee who
"Preacht. The Miniſter was Preach-
"ing upon that Text, *The fool hath*
"*ſaid in his heart, there is no God*,
"and ſhewed ſo much the Folly a
"as well as the Unreaſonableneſs o

Atheiſm

"Atheiſm that I could not but ſtay "and I was then convinc'd of my "miſtake, though I took no care "to live accordingly. I am ſure "now that there is a Hell after this "Life, and I am ſure I cannot a-"void it. When he told me that he had ſo much Torment in his mind, that he accounted it to be a Hell in this Life; I asked him, whether that Torment did not make him afraid to continue a Vitious Courſe, and whether it did not ſome times cauſe him to avoid the occaſions of wickedneſs, ſince it left ſuch a ſting in his conſcience? to which he replyed, "I ſcarce ever "ſhun'd any wickedneſs becauſe of "it, but ſometimes when I have "been going to Whore-houſes, I "have had ſo much torment in "my Conſcience, that I have, in "the way thither, gone backward "and forward ſeveral times, think-"ing with my ſelf, that if I went

"on, it would utterly ruin me;
"and yet the Devil for the moſt
"part prevailed with me ſo, that
"I did go on and commit wick-
"edneſs. I then thought that it
"was more than my Conſcience,
"and that I reſiſted Gods Spirit
"which would have prevented my
"being ſo wicked. From what he
ſaid concerning the Spirit of God,
I took occaſion to tell him, that
I thought his condition to be much
more hopeful than thoſe who were
leſs wicked and more hardned:
and that thoſe ſtrivings of Gods
Holy Spirit in and with his Con-
ſcience, always continuing, it was
a great token that God had a de-
ſign to give him his Grace, by which
his Repentance, though late,
might become a true and ſincere
Repentance: that change which
would make him fit for the happi-
neſs of another State: And that if
he loſt no time, but continued Pray-
ing

ing to God for his Grace and Mercy, I was in great hopes that the Spirit of God which had been his Earneſt Solicitor would be his Comforter, and take away all his fears. And I hope it proved ſo; for the next day when I came to viſit him, and Pray with him again, he told me (to uſe his own words) that he would not live in the World any longer where there was ſo much Wickedneſs. His *Nurſe* told me, that he had ſpent the whole Night crying and Praying to God with ſuch Expreſſions as ſhe had never heard from any other. There was the greateſt probability of a true Repentance upon a Death-Bed, that ever I obſerved in any who had lived wickedly till that time, and I could have wiſht that inſtead of deſiring to dye, that he might be no more tempted to wickedneſs; he had deſired to live, that he might have brought *forth fruits meet for*

Repentance, and that it would have pleaſed God to grant his deſire. I thought it might be uſeful to young men to read this Relation, and therefore I was not willing to omit it, by which they may ſee how men deceive themſelves, and what a dreadful condition they bring themſelves into, whileſt they make Atheiſm their ſhelter, and the hope that there is no other World but this to be their Refuge. The *Violence* which an Athieſt offers to his own mind (in which there is a natural dread of God) is too great to be *Perpetual*, and that's the reaſon that it ſeldom, if ever, continues till men go out of this World. When Death comes, and the Sinner is under the apprehenſion of it's approach, like *Nebucadnezzar*, the *dayes* of his being bruitiſh and keeping company with Beaſts are *at an end*, and his *Underſtanding is returned to him:* He can no longer en-

joy

joy the Pleaſurers of ſenſe, for the ſake of which he became bruitiſh, and that makes way for the exerciſe of his mind: and when he feels the different pains of his Soul and Body, he concludes that they are different beings, and that there is ſomewhat in him (as the late *Earl* of *Rocheſter* well expreſſed it) which is diſtinct from matter, which doth not dye with the Body: by reaſon of which, there is horrible confuſion in the Sinner to think whether it is going. And if the Convinc'd Athieſt be in ſuch Confuſion in this Life, what will his condition be, who dyes an Atheiſt, if there be any ſuch? Who can find Expreſſions to relate it, or Courage enough to uſe thoſe Expreſſions? He finds that there is a God, and falls under his Everlaſting Wrath the ſame moment. All the Arguments in the World did not convince him of a God, becauſe he

would not regard them: but Hell convinces him of it, becauſe he cannot avoid it. His firſt ſtep out of this World is into a Bottomleſs Pit, from which he never eſcapes, and where he never dyes, but continues for ever *Weeping and Wailing*, becauſe he would not believe what he heard, and ſometimes felt, concerning it. He was told that the Devils believed and trembled, he would not believe that he might not tremble, but now he is for ever feeling that, the fore-thought of which make the Devils tremble. I will not farther enlarge upon this Unpleaſant Head of diſcourſe, but earneſtly deſire all Young Men by their *Early Piety* to prevent that danger. By bearing the *Yoke*, they may be ſure of a God, and of another State, and if they refuſe it I am ſure they can never be ſecured that there is no God. O how happy are they, who have

have not only the Evidence of a God from Arguments propounded to their reaſon, but likewiſe from their own Experience! that have *Chriſt in* them *the Hope of Glory:* that have had the continued ſenſe of God, and a delight in him from their Youth: that like *Timothy, of a Child* have *known the holy Scriptures*, and have had Experience of the Holy Spirit, who was the Author of them, enlightning their minds, and quickning them to a diligent care to live in the Practice of them. If a man *Fears God from his Youth*, the ſolid Pleaſures which he hath in the Practice of Religion, will never ſuffer him to doubt of the Being of a God; much leſs deſire that there ſhould be none.

The Arguments of Religion are ſo ſtrong, and there is ſuch a correſpondence between natural and revealed Religion, that it is impoſſible any one can doubt of the Be-

ing of a God and of another State after this, but only those who (because they did not bear the *Yoke* in their Youth) have a desire that they should be insignificant.

II. *Early Piety* is good against the Power and prevalency of Evil Habits. Custom is of mighty force, and whatsoever any man hath used himself to, how unaccountable soever it is, he knows not how to alter it.

In things that are indifferent, that have neither good nor evil in them; such as I may call mimical Actions, or impertinent and insignificant Phrases and Expressions; when once a man by vain Affectation hath accustomed himself to the use of them, he knows not how to leave them, although he perceives that they render him ridiculous to men of Understanding.

Custome hath so great a force, that

that ſometimes it makes thoſe things to become eaſy, which in themſelves are very grievous and were ſo at firſt, to them that endure them. *Natura calamitatum mollimentum conſuetudinem invenit*, Cuſtome mitigateth Calamity. It hath been obſerved by ſome, that though *Slaves* weep at firſt, yet after three *Moneths* time they can ſing in the *Gallies*. How loathſome is a Priſon, and how terrible is Confinement to him that hath always had his Liberty; and yet we often find great Mirth and Jolity amongſt Priſoners after ſome time. I have heard of ſome who have been troubled when they have been turn'd out of a *Jayl*. I might likewiſe inſtance the power that Cuſtome hath in matters of Opinion, but that will more properly come under another head of Diſcourſe.

If Cuſtom hath ſuch power in thoſe

things which are in themſelves indifferent; nay, if it hath ſuch a prevalency in men, as to things which are in themſelves every way grievous! What a mighty force muſt Cuſtome *in Sinning* have upon the minds of men, becauſe there is at firſt a great propenſity in the Nature of man to it.

We have a common ſaying, and it is a very true one, *Cuſtome is a ſecond Nature*, which if rightly conſidered, would make every young man afraid of beginning an Evil courſe of Life, leſt it ſhould become habitual to him. His firſt Nature is hard enough to be overcome, he had not need to have a ſecond Nature to ſtruggle with.

The young man had need to look to himſelf, and take heed of a dangerous miſtake, which tends to the ruine of moſt of that Age: and that is, That it is eaſier for a man to bring his mind to the practice of

of Religion after he hath accuſtomed himſelf to ſin, than it is to ſubdue his preſent youthful inclinations to Luſt and Vanity: whereas, he might better and more truly argue the other way: that if it be ſo hard for him to fix his mind in the practice of Religion now, what will it be when he hath accuſtomed himſelf to the practice of ſin.

There is a known place in the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, which young men ſhould ſeriouſly conſider, *chap.* 13. *ver.* 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin? or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil.* We do not find any ſuch expreſſion in all the Scriptures to ſhew the difficulty of *Early Piety*. He that will perſwade a man that hath ſpent his youth in the purſuit of Sin and Vanity, to fear God and fix his mind to that which is good, doth for the moſt

moſt part find all that he can ſay to ſignifie as much as if he ſhould waſh a *Blackmoor* in hopes of making him white. There are few ſuch men but their Motto may be *Labour in Vain.* I know very well that the Prophets expreſſion is not to be underſtood with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs, as if it were altogether impoſſible, but only to ſhew that it is very difficult. It was uſual amongſt the *Jews* to expreſs thoſe things that are extreamly difficult, by thoſe things that are utterly impoſſible. The meaning of the *Prophet* is, that it is very hard for one that hath accuſtomed himſelf to do evil, to learn to do well.

If the young man did really conſider this, he would never adventure any delayes, for fear that an evil habit ſhould prevail (which is the caſe of thouſands, and only of ſuch as would not bear the *Yoke* in their

their Youth) ſo as to diſcourage him from attempting that change of his mind which is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation. It is as if the young man ſhould ſay, "I cannot bring "my mind to Religion now, but "I intend to do it when I am more "averſe to it. I cannot hate my ſin "now as 'tis neceſſary I ſhould, "but I hope to do it when I am "more in love with it. It is too "difficult for me to do it now be-"cauſe of the ſtrong inclinations of "my nature, and therefore I will "let it alone till cuſtom joyns with "my corrupt nature to make it more "difficult.

If that which young men imagine concerning the eaſineſs of becoming good, were not a cheat and deluſion; We ſhould have very few men but would become Religious when that age were paſt; but how ſeldom is it that any do become truly good and holy

who

who ſpend all their Youth in neglect of Religion, and in evil courſes. Moſt certain it is, that the Devil doth ſtrangely delude mankind in this matter. The young man ſaith, 'I know not how to regard 'the things of Religion, ſo that they 'ſhould have an influence upon my 'mind whereſoever I am, becauſe I 'have ſuch an averſeneſs to them 'in my nature, and ſuch a proneneſs 'to that which is evil; but if I live 'till my Youth be paſt, there will 'be an abatement of my evil deſires, 'and then I will be Serious and Re-'ligious: And if he lives till his Youth is ill ſpent and loſt, then his Language, is. 'I have ſo accuſto-'med my ſelf to that which is evil, 'that I know not how to mind that 'which is good, I can not leave that 'courſe which I am in: If I were a 'Young man again, and were to 'make my choice what ſort of Life 'to lead, then I could fix my mind

to

to that which is good.

It muſt be acknowledged that when age comes, there is no ſuch ſtrong inclination to Youthful Luſts and Vanities, as there was before: but therefore it muſt be conſidered, that a man may be nevertheleſs accuſtomed to do evil in general. It may be that when the enemy of his Soul perceives that he can no longer continue the Acts of uncleaneſs, there may be unclean wiſhes and deſires: and the will ſerves for the deed in an evil ſenſe as well as a good one: Or it may be there is an alteration from one ſin to another. He who when he was young, and fool'd away his Mony for Trifles, or that which is worſe, reſolves to make amends by that which he calls extraordinary good husbandry, but it is indeed extream Covetouſneſs: and that will continue to the laſt. How ſtrange ſoever it is, yet not more

ſtrange

ſtange than true, that old men (ſuch I mean who did not bear the Yoke in their Youth) love the World moſt, who are within a very little, in courſe of years, of leaving it.

There are others who are under the power of evil cuſtomes, whoſe caſe is different. They ſeem to be, and are in a ſenſe as well accuſtomed to do good as they are to do evil: Men who did not fear God in their Youth, upon whoſe minds and actions there was not an Early Reſtraint, but it was late ere they came to conſider the Arguments of Religion, and the Evidences of another State: And becauſe they are of undeniable force, therefore there muſt be ſome regard to them, yet ſo as that they will keep their cuſtom in ſinning likewiſe. From hence it is that we ſhall ſometimes find men very ſtrict in the obſervation

vation of the Lords Day, which is highly commendable. They are conſtant at their Devotions on that day, both Publick and Private: But the next day, the love of Wine and Company ſhall overcome them, by which it appears that an ill cuſtom will continue: *Saints on the Lords day, and Sots all the Week after.* I have wondred to obſerve what expreſſions, not only of Ingenuity but Piety, I have heard from ſome who could not reſiſt a temptation to that beaſtly and abominable Vice. Nay, after their Conſciences have tormented them, and Friends reproved them, and Miniſters whom they love have intreated them, and have obtained ſolemn Promiſes and Engagements from them; yet having been accuſtomed to that baſe ſin, they have ſtill continued it.

Others who ſeem ſometimes very Religious, Covetouſneſs and the love of World ſhall make them gripe

gripe the Poor: Or, cheat and diſſemble in the way of their Calling.

Thus when men do not begin at firſt to be Religious, but accuſtom themſelves to do evil, they come afterwards (if I may ſo ſay) to mix Religion and Irreligion together. Their Religious Services are (as our Saviours Expreſſion is) like puting *New Wine into Old Bottles*, which taints it and makes it good for nothing. Some men will have ſomwhat of Religion, which may a little quiet their minds, but an evil cuſtome makes it altogether inſignificant as to the ſaving of their ſouls; becauſe their minds are not renued.

And if cuſtome in ſining prevailes ſo much where there is ſome ſenſe of Religion and Serious conſideration of another State, it muſt needs tyrannize in men that are more

more bruitiſh. What an aſtoniſhing thing it is to ſee how men that are addicted to Drunkenneſs will continue it in deſpight of all Oppoſition, or all Arguments whatſoever. You ſhall ſometimes ſee a man of low Degree, ſo beſotted to the love of Drink, and Swiniſh Companions; that it is not the flaſhes of Hell in his Conſcience, which ſuch men have confeſt: in reference to another Life, it is not the bitter complaint of a ſorrow-bitten Wife, or the ſight of his pale and ragged Children, though he loves them: It is not the fear of a *Jayl*, and of himſelf, as well as his Family wanting Bread, that can make him leave that Sin. I have heard a Drunkard wiſh that Drunkenneſs were Treaſon or Felony, intimating that nothing but the expectation of an untimely death can be of Force ſtrong enough to break off the Cuſtome of that Sin, which is in

in it ſelf certainly the moſt Odious of any Vice, becauſe it deprives a man of himſelf.

Some have thought that they could not curſe their Enemies worſe than to wiſh that they might be delighted in an Evil Cuſtome: and I think they were not miſtaken, for it doth ſtrangely Tyrannize, notwithſtanding the ſtrongeſt Force of Argument that can be brought againſt it; and which the accuſtomed Sinner acknowledges ſhould prevail with him. The Language of the Sinners heart is, "I muſt ac-
"knowledge that what you ſay
"is true, but I am otherwiſe en-
"gaged. If I had intended to live
"a Religious Life, I would have
"begun it before, but now I know
"not how to do it; my mind and
"my Company is otherwiſe diſ-
"poſed, and I cannot now alter my
"Converſation; your Arguments
"are ſtrong enough to convince my
"Reaſon,

"Reaſon, but not to brake a Cuſtom. It was the juſt Complaint of the great Moraliſt, *Ratione non componimur ſed conſuietudine abducimur*, &c. We are not ſo much ruled by Reaſon, as we are carried away by Cuſtome.

This Argument ſhould be of mighty force with young men, leſt as *Jacob* ſaid concerning *Joſeph*, when he ſaw the coat, *Gen.* 37. 22. *An Evil Beaſt hath devoured him*, Joſeph *is rent in pieces*, ſo his Parents or Friends ſhould lament for him, and ſay; An Evil Cuſtome hath devoured him, he is utterly ruined.

Who is there that hath any ſerious conſideration of the happineſs and miſery of man, both in this Life and the next, who will not ſay, that it had been better for a man never to have been born, than to be ruled by the power of an Evil habit, contrary to his Reaſon

ſon and Underſtanding? what a grievous thing it is when Conſcience drives one way, and Cuſtome draws another way, and is too hard for it.

Who is there that is thus enſlaved, who would not think himſelf happy if it were otherwiſe with him? This miſchief the young man may avoid. Inſtead of being accuſtomed to Evil, he may be accuſtomed to that which is good, which is the happieſt caſe in the World. He that is accuſtomed to do Well, will much leſs leave it, than he that is accuſtomed to do Evil: for certainly, he that takes in at firſt with his Reaſon and Conſcience, will much leſs leave that courſe, than he that offers Violence to them, and runs away with his Luſts and Wickedneſs. Beſides, the Pleaſures of Religion are infinitely greater than the Pleaſures of Sin; and therefore Cuſtome muſt needs prevail on that hand,

hand, as well as on the other. To this I may add, that he who is accuſtomed to the ways of Religion, meets only with temptations to corrupt his will, but no argument to his Underſtanding. He that is accuſtomed to do Evil always, knows that he ſhould do otherwiſe; but he that is accuſtomed to that which is good, hath Religion, and Reaſon, and Cuſtome, all conſenting together, and muſt needs make him happy. If a *Child be trained up in the way in which he ſhould walk*, or makes choice of that way, *When he is old he will not depart from it.* I will inlarge no farther upon this Argument, but only ask the Young Man this one *Queſtion*: Whether he had rather all the dayes of his life, that the wayes of God ſhould be uncouth to him, or the wayes of ſin and Wickedneſs? He is at his choyce, it is according to mens beginning when they are Young.

Now

Now is the time in which you muſt reſolve, whether it be beſt for you to accuſtome your ſelves to that which is good, or to that which is evil.

III. *Early Piety* is good to prevent hardneſs of Heart: that Obduracy by which it is that men, Acting contrary to the Reaſon of their minds, do become in a great meaſure inſenſible of their Condition, and the danger which they are in. This may well be joyned to that which I laſt ſpake of; for when men accuſtome themſelves to *do Evil*, they find a neceſſity of hardning their minds againſt the force of thoſe ſecret importunities from within, and ſtrong Arguments from without, which will otherwiſe prevail with them to *do good*. This Temper, or rather Diſtemper of mind, ſhews a man to be in the worſt condition that any man can be in. The Devil

Devil himſelf can deſire nothing more of any man, than that he ſhould have his mind hardened in an Evil Courſe; for by this, all the means of Salvation are reſiſted by him, and becomes ineffectual, and he is fitted for all manner of Wickedneſs: And what can the Devil deſire more, than that a man ſhould turn his back upon the Kingdom of Heaven, and go the Direct way, as he ſhall appoint him, to Hell, and to Deſtruction?

I do not intend to enlarge upon this particular, becauſe I ſhall have an Occaſion to ſpeak ſomewhat to the ſame purpoſe, when I come to conſider the Caſe of late Penitents, or rather of thoſe who promiſe to themſelves that they ſhall be ſuch. In the mean while, I will only ſtate the Caſe as it is, and deſire the young man to conſider of it.

When thoſe that are Young refuſe the *Yoke*, and will not ſuffer the

impreſſions of Religion in their minds, but addict themſelves to the *Pleaſures of Sin*; whatſoever the Pretence may be (and it is not to be imagin'd but the Devil is ſo cunning, as that he can eaſily delude a young man, when he doth not reſolve to be Religious againſt all Temptations and Suggeſtions whatſoever) they muſt then conſult their Eaſe, although (which is very ſad to conſider of) they know that it is in vain for them to think of conſulting any ſatisfaction in a Sinful Courſe. The great deſire of the Young Man is, that he may have a great ſenſe of the Pleaſures of ſin, and no ſenſe of God and of his Duty to him, by which he ſhall be diſturbed. He would have all Mirth and Jolity, and Feaſting himſelf with Pleaſures, whatſoever becomes of him afterwards, but he doth not love *the hand Writeing upon the wall*, which tells him

of

of what is befalling him. His Unhappineſs (for ſo he accounts it) is that he cannot enjoy Beaſtly Pleaſures, as Beaſts do; but that there muſt be Diſquietments about them which they are freed from, and therefore his great Atchievement, which inſtead of Piety and Vertue he aims at, is to get off thoſe Diſquietments. He is vext at his Conſcience, that it will not let him alone, but torment him for forgetting that there is a God, and that he is a Man: And therefore he reſolves to oppoſe the Dictates of that, and ſince it is a faculty which may be in a great meaſure ſubdued and ſilenced, he is reſolv'd that his Conſcience ſhall be ſo that he may be as quiet as he can. His Will ſhall be Lord of his Underſtanding and Reaſon, and command it to be ſilent and give way to Reſolution, how deſperate and unaccountable ſoever it be.

There is besides his Conscience or rather together with it, the Spirit of God *Striving with him* to bear the *Yoke*, importuning him to make a good Choice at first, by which he may come to be happy for ever after. Vicious men have confest, that they had such strong Importunities to *Piety*, when they were young, and had not hardned themselves in Sinful Course that they could not think they proceeded only from their Consciences, but that the Holy Spirit of GOD did earnestly contend with them. That Person whose Death Bed Expressions I mentioned, as well as many others, confest that it was his Case.

The Young Sinners checks of his Conscience do proceed from the Goodness of God to him, and therefore should oblige him to a Compliance; but it is all to no purpose. Others may love God best, and for

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ſake their Youthful Luſts and Plea-
ſures for his ſake, and at his requeſt.
But he loves his Youthful Luſts and
Pleaſures beſt, and therefore will
forſake God and Religion for their
ſakes; notwithſtanding the infinite
goodneſs and condeſcention of God
in the earneſt ſolicitations of his
Holy Spirit. It is a trouble to him
that ſo ſoon as he departs from
God, God doth not depart from
him; and let him alone to purſue
his Luſts and Pleaſures without
diſturbance, and therefore it is that
he hardens himſelf againſt God, by
Reſolution not to liſten to his ſe-
cret Motions and Importunities.

The young Man hath more work
yet to do; beſides the Stir that is
within him, there is Diſturbance from
without. The Miniſtry of the Word
vexes him. He is, it may be, forced
to go to Church, and he cannot
hear a Miniſter, but he is ready to
ſay of him, as *Ahab* ſaid of *Micaiah*, *I*

hate him, for he doth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil. He therefore reſolves, that he will not regard what he ſaith ſo as to ſuffer any Impreſſion upon his mind. He hardens his Heart ſo that the *two-edged Sword* ſhall not cut it. He will look upon Praying and Preaching only as things in courſe, which no body ſhall need to regard, ſo as to alter the courſe of a ſinful life for the ſake of them. *Hearing* does no hurt to his ſin, ſo long as he is reſolved againſt *Doing*. If the Miniſter that he hears preſſes him hard by the force of Arguments, he will either conceive ſome Prejudice againſt him, and that, how unaccountable ſo ever it be, ſhall make him ſlight what he ſaies, though it be from Gods Word that he ſpeaks it, or elſe he will hear ſome other man. Whatſoever is ſaid to him, he is reſolved to continue as he is; and as Hardneſs increaſes, ſo doth his

his Contempt of Religion. It may be, that in a ſhort time the young man is ſo far from trembling at Gods word, or being any wayes governed by it, that he will not ſo much as hear it; but on the Lords Day, he can run up and down the City to ſee a great many Miniſters Preaching, but hear none. Or he is ſo hardned, that he can turn his back upon the Worſhip of God wholly, and make it a day of ſinful Pleaſures. Thus doth the Young man inſtead of bearing the Yoke in his Youth, harden his mind againſt it, and the longer he lives, the farther he is from it. His mind is wholly ſet upon other things. Chriſt *ſtands* at his *Door and knocks*, but he is reſolved he will not let him in, knowing that he muſt turn another Inhabitant out, which he will not part with. And whatſoever is ſaid to him from the Word of God, though he cannot

deny but it is from the Word of God, yet he can deny regarding of it; and therefore the Language of his ſoul is like that of the Idolaters, Jer. 44. 16. *As for the word that thou haſt ſpoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatſoever thing goeth out of our own mouth*, &c. And at length, it may be, that which at firſt he deſired is granted to him, but it is like a ſick mans deſire of that which makes his condition irrecoverable. He deſired, that God might let him alone, and he does ſo. His deſire was to harden his heart ſo, that he might feel no Diſturbance, and he hath his deſire, in a great meaſure, granted to him. As God ſaid to *Ephraim*, He is *joyned to Idols, let him alone*; ſo God ſaith of the man that refuſed the Yoke in his Youth, he is fully bent upon Sin and Wickedneſs, *Let him alone:* He hath been *Vile* from his Youth,

Youth, *Let him be vile ſtill. In his filthineſs is Lewdneſs*, or wicked obſtinacy; *Becauſe I would have purged him from his filthineſs, and he was not purged, therefore he ſhall not be purged from his filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon him.* His hardning himſelf againſt God, hath provoked him to give him over to a Judicial hardneſs, which makes his condition paſt all Recovery. And when we conſider what horrid Wickedneſs, what Contempt of God and of Religion young men are guilty of, for want of *Early Piety*, we may fear that this ſhould become their caſe, if it be not ſo already.

Solomon ſaith, *Happy is the man that feareth alway, but he that hardneth his heart ſhall fall into miſchief*, Prov. 28. 14. A man cannot be ſaid to fear alway, unleſs he begins to fear when he is young; that is, to have that Fear of God in his

mind, and that Senſe of the Danger of a ſinful life, which makes him careful of his Actions; but he that *heardneth his heart*, that is, he who *caſteth off fear, ſhall fall into miſchief.* Let not the Young man ask me, what the Happineſs is on one hand, or the Miſchief on the other, for I cannot tell him. I may ſay, that Heaven and Hell muſt anſwer thoſe queſtions; but yet from what I have ſaid, he may conſider the danger of refuſing the Yoke in his Youth, to be very great.

IV. *Early Piety* is good to prevent a wounded Spirit, that inward and ſecret Guilt which is alwayes gnawing and tormenting the Sinner who is impenitent and not exceedingly hardned in his Wickedneſs. The Young man doth no ſooner refuſe the Yoke, but Fear and Terrour doth in ſome meaſure ſurprize him; and although he may ſtrive

ſtrive to harden his heart, ſo as he may have no ſenſe of what he hath done, yet it is doubtful whether ever he can ſo effect it as to have any tolerable Eaſe in his mind. He cannot but often think within himſelf, that he hath more reaſon to be diſquieted, from what Gods Word and his own Conſcience tells him, and all men that wiſh him well; than to be contented with his condition, becauſe it is a common caſe, and eſpecially amongſt young men; which is to act directly contrary to Gods word, in *following a multitude to do evil.*

Some Young Men do harden themſelves a great deal more, and ſome a great deal ſooner than others, according to the Example of their Parents, or thoſe amongſt whom they live; and it is to be feared that there are many (as I have already mentioned) who are given over to a Judicial Hardneſs, and

and ſhall never repent, but have terrible Convulſions in their conſciences to think of their condition, and are often arreſted with terrible Fears and Diſquietments.

Thoſe that refuſe to bear Gods Yoke, which is eaſy, have the Devils ſhackle inſtead of it, which is ſo gauling and uneaſy that they are never at quiet. Sometimes the thoughts of their condition diſturbs their mirth. *In laughter their hearts are ſorrowful*; and if they can forget their condition till their Jollity be done, yet, *The end of their mirth is heavineſs.*

This argument ſhould be of great force with the young man, if he conſiders, that it is not only the caſe of thoſe that continue the practice of ſin, but of thoſe few likewiſe who repent when they have loſt the pleaſure of ſerving God in their Youth, and become Religious. This ſeems to be the caſe of

Job

Job by that complaint which he made, *chap.* 13. v. 26. *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the ſins of my Youth.* It is certain, that thoſe who begin late to be religious, are very apt to miſ-giving thoughts concerning their condition; eſpecially when any Affliction ſeizeth upon them. They are in doubt, whether God hath accepted of the *Latter Fruits*, ſince the Devil had the *Firſt*, and are afraid that inſtead of their Services being accepted, the ſins of their Youth have rendred them for ever abominable. This may make them often pray, as *David* did, *Remember not the ſins of my Youth, not my tranſgreſſions*, Pſal. 25. 7. He that can ſay, from my Youth have I feared God, and walked in his wayes, and made it my ſincere Endeavour to pleaſe God, hath the moſt fixed, ſolid and durable Comfort, and the beſt ſecurity againſt

Fears

Fears and Doubts, which are apt to ſurprize late Penitents. As a man feels the Paines and Aches of broken bones and hurts, of which he is long ſince recovered ſo that there is no danger as to his Life; ſo thoſe that have broken the Peace of their minds, and wounded their Conſciences by known ſins long ſince committed, may feel the ſmart of them many years after, although their ſins be forgiven and there be no danger as to their immortal Souls. *It is good for a man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth*, that he may not be perplexed with thoſe Fears and Diſquietments which oft-times befals thoſe that begin to bear it afterwards.

But this is only the Caſe of a few; for as the Devil tempts Young men to neglect their Duties to God at firſt, with a Deſign to keep them alwayes in the practice of ſin; ſo he doth for the moſt part prevail with

with them, and if they do not harden themſelves ſo, as to caſt off Fear, it proves very tormenting to them. They have real Feares; they are afraid, and none can tell them that it is without cauſe, unleſs they *Cry Peace when there is no Peace*; for they are at enmity with God, and are in the number of the *Children of Diſobedience*, againſt whom his *Wrath is coming*. They have likewiſe imaginary Fears: *They are afraid where no fear is*: As *Cain* was afraid that *every man*, ſo a guilty ſinner is ſometimes afraid leſt every thing, ſhould ſlay him. The inward and real cauſe of Fear makes him upon all occaſions ſuſpect ſome hurt coming to him, when there is no apparent danger.

Their Diſquietments muſt needs be great if we either conſider their caſe in general, or with relation to particular Acts.

1. If we conſider the caſe of that ſinner in General. He is wrong: He is out of the way. He ſhould be in the Narrow way that leads to Life, and he is in the Broad way that leads to Deſtruction. He is a bewildred Child that is out of the way to his Fathers houſe. His ſoul is among them that ſeek to deſtroy it. He that ſaith, I will gratify my Youthful Luſts, and not bear the Yoke, may as well ſay, I will now provide a Torment to my ſoul, which ſhall laſt all the dayes of my life; and I ſhall feel it all my life, though it may be I ſhall not diſcover it till my death.

2. If we conſider the caſe of Young Men, as to Particular Acts of Sin, when they refuſe the *Yoke*. The Devil will ſtick ſome Poyſonous Dart or other in their Souls, which ſhall prove a Torment to them as long as they Live. It may be they ſhall be guilty of

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ſome Horrible Contempt of GOD, and of Religion. Young men in this Age climb apace, and get into the *Seat of the Scornful*, but it often happens, that they do not ſit eaſy in that Seat, however they continue in it. They are often forc'd to think, that there is a fearful puniſhment coming upon thoſe that affront Heaven, and deride at Goodneſs, as appears by the Confeſſions of ſuch Perſons, when ſickneſs and the Fears of Death are upon them. Thoſe who ſeem to be moſt undaunted in Wickedneſs, have diſcovered that they were never freed from grievous Terrours and Perplexities of mind. Sometimes we find, that Second-Table-Sins have been the chief Cauſe of the Young Mans Torment. Diſobedience to Parents, & Uncleanneſs, (of which I have already made mention) make grievous Gaſhes in the Conſciences of young men. But there is

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another ſin which I would ſpeak of, that proves a dreadful and a laſting Torment to the mind, and that is the Sin of Fraud, or of Theft. When a young man hath wronged another, by taking that which is not his own, it is of fearful conſequence becauſe it is a ſin which requires Reſtitution, or Acknowledgment of the fault in caſe of Inablity to reſtore. *The Thief is aſhamed when he is found*, and he is exceedingly aſhamed to diſcover himſelf, and the baſe ſin which he hath been guilty of; and for that Reaſon it is, that many young men run into deſperate Courſes becauſe they know not how, without great Shame and Confuſion, to get out of that Labarinth into which Fraud hath plung'd them: And by this means they continue under the preſſures of Guilt and Fear. Fraud and Injuſtice, are not only a Violation

lation of the written Law of God, but likewiſe ſuch a Violation of the common Principles of Nature, that no man can poſſibly bear the thoughts of what he hath done, unleſs he be ſtrangely hardned in Wickedneſs, and becomes a Beaſt of Prey, rather than a Man of Reaſon and Underſtanding. I am confident, there are many young men, who are ſo ſenſible of the neceſſity of a Religious Life, that they would betake themſelves to the practice of it, if they were not horribly entangled by the ſin of Fraud and Cozenage.

Thus, beſides the general Caſe of the Sinner, who being at Enmity againſt God in his mind, can never be at quiet in himſelf; there are particular Acts of ſin, which prove to be a grievous Torment.

I hope by what I have ſaid it appears, that *Early Piety* is good to prevent thoſe Fears and Diſquiet-

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ments of mind which attend a ſinful Life, and to ſettle a ſolid and durable Joy and Rejoycing in the Soul. It layes a ſure Foundation for that *Peace which paſſeth all Underſtanding*. He that betimes doth delight himſelf in the Almighty, his Joy and Rejoycing never ceaſeth, but continues with him, through all the Stages of this Life, and then paſſeth with him to a Glorious Immortality. He hath that Joy in the *Spring* of his years, which no *Winter* can kill or cauſe to decay. Whatever fails him, his *Early Piety* will ſtick to him, and will be a laſting and durable Satisfaction. He that bears the *Yoke* in his youth, is one to whom *God giveth Songs in the Night*; but he that refuſeth it, ſerves a Maſter that doth not give him Songs in the Day. He is either Tormented all his Lifetime, if he continues impenitent, with perplexing horrible Fears; or

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if he be not, his heart is hardned, and he is inſenſible of his Condition, which is a thouſand times worſe. *Early Piety* is good againſt both.

V. *Early Piety* is good to prevent Preſumption and vain Confidence; by which it is, that when a man is in a wrong ſtate, and in that way which leads to Deſtruction, he concludes that it ſhall go well with him at laſt, and that he ſhall be in as happy a condition, as if he had begun at firſt to be Religious. I thought it very proper that this Particular ſhould follow the two former. When a man hath begun wrong, and knows himſelf to be in the ſtate of the Impenitent, it muſt needs bring unſpeakable Torments to his mind, every time that he ſeriouſly conſiders it: And therefore to avoid this, either he doth deſperately harden his heart, that he may

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go on in a wicked Course without Fear, neither considering what he does nor what will be the event of his actions, nor yet enduring that any one should tell him of his danger, for he *hates Instruction* and *despiseth Reproof*: Or else he propounds somewhat to himself, from which he hopes he shall have Happiness in the end, and upon that, how vain soever it be, he depends, or I may say he makes it his Pillow upon which he layes him down and sleeps, as securely as he can, all his life time. He is by this at some kind of Ease, although it were better for him if he were under continual Torment. His condition must needs be bad, who thinks it is good when it is not, & it must needs be bad in the sinners case, because by how much his vain Confidence that it shall go well with him, encreaseth, by so much doth his danger increase. The

Wound of ſin in the ſoul growes more and more incurable, according to the Sinners Inſenſibility of the paines of it, which makes him careleſs of uſing the right means for the Cure of it; and this Inſenſibility proceeds from his vain Hope, that all will be well at laſt. His condition is very ſad, becauſe he is ſecure in a bad State, for by this means all the force of Arguments, by which Sinners are brought to Repentance, and into a happy condition, are utterly loſt upon him. This we may juſtly Fear, is the Caſe of thouſands who do not bear the Yoke in their Youth. They have greater, though not better, confidence that it ſhall be well with them, than thoſe that began at firſt to be Religious. The Good man may ſometimes ſay as *Job* did, *I have ſinned, what ſhall I do*; when the Preſumtuous Sinner ſaith, *I ſhall have peace, though I walk after the Imaginati-*

ginations of my own heart. I will grant, that the vicious Young man may ſay: Though I will not bear the Yoke, yet I will be as confident of my Salvation as they that do. But alas for him; This Hope comes from the Author of Deſpair, and from the Subject of it too: It is the Devil that gives the Sinner this hope, who hath none for himſelf. The Children are cheated by him, as the Parents were. He told them that they ſhould not *dye*, though they diſobeyed, notwithſtanding God had ſaid otherwiſe; and in like manner he tells the Children, that they ſhall be happy at laſt although they do that the whileſt which makes all men miſerable.

If he had feared God in his Youth, he ſhould have been well aſſured of his Salvation, for then Gods Word and promiſes had been his Security. But ſince he neglected it, and is engaged in a ſinful courſe, he reſolves

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to be as quiet as he can, and to hope that he ſhall be happy at laſt, though he hath nothing but the Devils word for it.

This Preſumption, and Vain Confidence, proceeds from the Expectation of Gods mercy, upon a late Repentance. As the Devil, when he tempted our Saviour, would have had him caſt himſelf down from the Pinacle of the Temple, urging that the Scripture was his Security, that God had *Given his his Angels charge over him*; So he tempts the Sinner to obey his Motions to Sin and Wickedneſs, becauſe the Scripture hath declared that God is Merciful to Sinners, and that thoſe who repent, and turn to him ſhall be Saved. This is the young mans Refuge, of which he is as confident as if there were no doubt to be made of it. When we tell impenitent ſinners who did not at firſt *Chooſe the Fear*

of the Lord, that they will for ever periſh, except they Repent, they readily grant it, but it doth not trouble them, becauſe they doubt not but they ſhall take off that Exception. It makes no more impreſſion upon them, than if we ſhould tell a notorious Malefactor that he will certainly be Executed if he doth not beg the Kings Pardon, which he will be very ready to do. The minds of Sinners are poſſeſſed with ſuch thoughts of the mercy of God, and the Merits of a Saviour, that they think they ſhall not fail of Forgiveneſs unleſs they fail to ask it. And if by ſudden Death they ſhould be deprived of asking it (which is not a very common caſe, and therefore they will adventure it) they hope that God will however have mercy upon them, for they think it would be a very hard caſe if God ſhould deſtroy them, becauſe they had no time

time to ask him forgivneneſs.

If they have Time in their ſickneſs, and the uſe of their Reaſon, they will repent, and if they have not, they hope they ſhall obtain mercy without it.

This, this is the Devils bait by which he catches Young Men. This is the Snare which he layes for them, and God knowes they run apace into it: What a train of Deluſions and vain Suggeſtions doth he lay for the Young man that will not bear the Yoke? Inſtead of embracing the wayes of Truth at firſt, he gives himſelf up to Lies all his dayes. To the end therefore that the Young Man may not be thus deluded, I ſhall enlarge ſomewhat more upon this than I have done upon the former heads.

The caſe is plainly this. Though the Young Man ſerves Sin and the Devil at firſt, yet he hopes at laſt that by his repentance, he

ſhall become the Servant of God, or be in the ſame caſe with Gods Servants as to another World.

That Young Men may not Periſh for ever by this Deluſion, I earneſtly intreat them to conſider what I ſhall offer to them from theſe ſeveral heads.

1. I ſhall conſider ſomewhat from the nature of Repentance. If the Young Man rightly conſiders what it is, he will have little reaſon to live a ſinful Life upon the hopes of it afterwards. There are two things in it: Sorrow for what is paſt, and Amendment for the time to come.

1. Let us conſider what the Grief and Sorrow of Repentance is. It is a real and unfeigned Sorrow in the heart of the Sinner for what he hath done. And it is more or leſs according to the Circumſtances of his Caſe and Faults which he hath committed. It is

either according to the Danger that a man hath brought himſelf into: Or the Baſeneſs and unworthineſs of the fact, conſidering againſt whom it was committed.

Repentance is ſometimes called Shame and Confuſion, and it is that which the Young Man may expect, who refuſeth the Yoke; according to that which the Prophet ſaith of *Ephraim*, Jer. 31. 19. *I was aſhamed, yea even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my Youth.* He that doth a baſe and wilful act, and intends to repent afterwards, doth not conſider what Repentance is: What Trouble and Perplexity ſeizeth upon the mind of him that looks back upon his Actions: What achings of Heart: What diſquieting Thoughts: How many reſtleſs Hours: What conſultation with Miniſters and others: What Praying and Crying to God there is before the Sinner can be ſatisfied that his Repen-

Repentance is accepted, and that his ſin is pardoned.

1. The grief of Repentance is according to the Danger that a man hath brought himſelf into, of which we may take ſome eſtimate by conſidering what Grief and Sorrow there is in reference to temporal Evils. What Bitterneſs is there in the ſoul of a Prodigal when he comes to beggery, ands find himſelf Friendleſs? Or in him that hath brought ſome grievous Diſeaſe to himſelf, which puts him to intolerable pain, and makes it very doubtful whether ever he ſhall eſcape? How bitterly doth a man *mourn when his Fleſh and his Body are conſumed*, and he knows that it is the effect of his own Wickedneſs and Folly? Every one knows the caſe of ſuch to be very Grievous. And if a man be ſo troubled about temporal things, what muſt he be about thoſe that are Spiritu-

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al and Eternal. How is a man tormented when he hath thrown away his Soul, and is afraid that it is paſt regaining? If a diſeaſe in the Body be ſo grievous, what is a wounded Spirit? What grief muſt it needs be to the Sinner when he conſiders, that it hath been his buſineſs from his Youth, to *heap up Wrath unto himſelf againſt the day of Wrath?*

If therefore it may be granted, that Young Men are not Atheiſts, but will acknowledge that there is a God, and that Religion is a real thing; How can they imagine Repentance to be ſuch an eaſy thing, that they may from the expectation of it, make choyce of that way to Salvation, and not rather begin ſo at firſt, that they may not have a ſinful Life to repent of? For can any man think that when he comes ſeriouſly to conſider his Danger that he is in a

ſinful State; that he is under the Power and Dominion of ſin, and in the way to everlaſting Deſtruction; and yet it ſhall be but a light Grief and Sorrow to him; I am ſure he doth not Underſtand or Conſider what Repentance is. And I may doubt whether he ever converſed with any who were late Penitents, for they are not often to be found.

2. When a man Repents he conſiders the Perſon Offended. If he be Eminent in Place, and one that is able to do him great Good, or great Hurt, he is accordingly Concern'd at what he hath done. What a Heart-breaking-Sorrow is it to a poor man, when he hath loſt the Favour of a Rich Man, upon whom he had a great Dependance? How doth that Poor man run up and down, to make Friends to him, that his mind may be at Eaſe? If the Diſpleaſure of a great Man, who

who is but *Duſt* and *Aſhes*, as well as the meaneſt, be ſo Terrible, what is the diſpleaſure of the great God of Heaven and Earth. And when men come to Repent, and to bethink themſelves of what they have done, they are far more ſenſible of the Diſpleaſure of that Great and infinite Being, than any man can be of the diſpleaſure of another man.

The grief of Repentance is according to the Obligation that the Penitent is under to him whom he hath Offended. Ingratitude makes a terrible Reflection, and nothing doth more Shame and Confound a guilty Perſon, than that he hath abuſed a Benefactor, whom he could never have Recompenſed for kindneſſes received from him. It makes him Dumb, and Speechleſs, ſo that he hath nothing to ſay, becauſe of his Conſternation, at the thougths of what he hath done. Who can expreſs

the Grief, and Trouble that is in the mind of a late Penitent, when he conſiders what a Requital he hath made to God for his Goodneſs to him! When Sinners come to a ſerious Conſideration of God, and of themſelves, there is nothing which they ſpeak more of, than of the Goodneſs of God, how poor and how afflicted ſoever they have been: They are ſenſible that they have deſerved ſo ill from him, that it is his *Mercy* they *are not Conſumed*, and therefore they acknowledg his Goodneſs, whatever their Afflictions have been. What a Fearful Trouble then muſt it be to the Sinner, when, looking back upon his paſt Actions, he finds that there hath been a Competition between the Almighty and him; whether God ſhould ſhew moſt Goodneſs, or he be guilty of moſt Wickedneſs. Beſides, when Sinners repent, they are commonly ſenſible that

that God's Goodneſs to them, was the very occaſion of their Wickedneſs againſt him. They have lived, as if Gods giving them Health, and Riches, and Liberty, had been to engage them, not to the practice of Religion, but of Sin and VVickedneſs. It is a terrible Grief to a Diſobedient Child, when he conſiders what he hath done againſt Natural Affection, and Innumerable Obligations of Love and Tenderneſs: It muſt needs be a greater Grief to the Sinner, when he conſiders what Violence he hath offered to his Natural Principle of Love and Duty to God, and the infinite Obligation which God hath been pleaſed to lay upon him: Surely when the Young Man refuſeth the *Yoke*, and intends to Repent, he doth not conſider what his Grief and Sorrow is like to be upon this account.

I may add to this, That the Grief

Grief of a late Penitent is exceedingly encreaſed by the Malice of the Devil. He then poſſeſſes the Sinner with dreadful Apprehenſions of his Condition, by telling him that he is loſt and undone, and that God will never be reconcil'd to him.

He that perſwaded the Young Man to make light of Repentance as if it were a buſineſs that admitted of a quick and eaſy diſpatch; when he comes to Repent, tells him another Story. He endeavours then to prevent it by telling him that it will be a Trouble too great for him, to think of what he hath done; and if he cannot prevent it, he will then purſue the Sinner with ſuggeſtions that he hath not repented enough, and ſo keeps him overwhelm'd with Grief and Sorrow to think of his condition. Then, he that thought there was no great danger in committing the greateſt

ſin,

ſin, thinks now that every little Sin is too great to be forgiven, and ſometimes thinks he commits unpardonable ſins, when he commits none at all. Every melancholy Thought; every ſudden Imagination darted into his Mind, is an unſpeakable Grief and trouble to him. It is endleſs to tell you, how many Perplexities of this nature have attended the late Repentance of thoſe who have lived Sinful Lives.

If all theſe things be conſidered, how good is it for a man to bear the Yoke in his Youth that he may not have the grief and ſorrow of an After-Repentance to undergo?

I know that it hath been the conceit of ſome in our dayes, that no man can be in the State of Religion, but he muſt know the time of his Converſion, and be

be able to give an account when he repented, & turned from the wayes of Sin and Wickedneſs. But it is a very groundleſs conceit, for there are many (and I pray God encreaſe the number of them) who *Fear God from their Youth*, as *Obadiah* did, 1 *Kings* 18. 12. who never were converted from a Sinful and Ungodly Life; for they never lived ſuch a Life. The care of their Parents to bring them up in the *nurture and Admonition of the Lord:* Their early liſtnings *to the voice of their Teachers*, and taking their Councel, hath prevented the neceſſity of Repentance, and conſequently of the great Grief and Sorrow which attends it. I know there is no Good man but hath frequent occaſion to Repent, becauſe every man that is a Sinner muſt be Penitent, but thoſe are the ſecond Acts of Repentance which are commonly very ſhort and quickly bring great

Joy

Joy and Comfort to the Mind. It is the firſt Act, the turning from one State to another, that I am ſpeaking of, and that Sorrow and Grief which is the conſequent of a Sinful Life and a continued Enmity againſt God. *It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth*, that he may not endure thoſe ſharp Conflicts, thoſe Terrors and Diſquietments of mind which attend an After-Repentance.

2. Repentance is not only a great grief for what is paſt, but Amendment for the time to come. A man may, in a ſenſe, be ſaid to Repent that continues as he was before. Doubtleſs it is a very common thing for Sinners to Repent, ſo ſoon as they have done a baſe Act, becauſe it naturally brings trouble to them; but yet the next Temptation prevailes; which ſhewes what a Slave a man is to his Luſt. The Maſter

Maſter calles, and his Servant obeys his voice, though he hath regret in his mind, and wiſhes it were otherwiſe with him. But that Repentance which is true and valued either by God or Man, is that Repentance which produceth Amendment. Who regards a man that ſaith, he is ſorry for what he hath done, and yet preſently doth the ſame again? The notion of Repentance is very eaſy, and that which every one underſtands: It is a mans being ſorrowful for what he hath done, and his reſolving to do ſo no more. But there is this difference between Repenance towards men, and Repentance towards God: The firſt may be in a mans own power, but the ſecond is not. If I have treſpaſſed upon my Neighbour, or done any injury, I can be ſorry for it, and make Reſtitution, which is all that he requires, and take care that I offend him

him not for the time to come. But if I have offended God? If I have lived a ſinful and ungodly Life? I cannot amend that and lead a new Life without the Grace and Holy Spirit of God. Becauſe in Repentance towards God, there is not only a neceſſity of changing the courſe of a mans Actions, but the State and Habit of his Mind. There muſt be a new Principle of Piety and Holineſs, from which good Actions do proceed. It is poſſible for a man to change the courſe of his Actions towards God, and yet not be a true Penitent. He that hath been debaucht may live ſoberly and temperately. He that never came to Church may frequent it; and more inſtances may eaſily be given; and all this may be for the ſake of his credit and Reputation, or it may be that he may give ſome eaſe to himſelf by it, becauſe of his tormenting Conſci-

ence,

ence; but all this while the man is no true Penitent: There is not in him that Principle of Piety and Holineſs by which he delights in God, and hates all that is evil. True Repentance is a Change of the Nature and Diſpoſition of the mind, which cannot be without the Work of Gods Holy Spirit.

When therefore the Young Man refuſeth the Yoke with an intent to repent afterwards, he promiſes that to himſelf, which is out of his own Power. An ability to perform it muſt come from that God whoſe Yoke he refuſeth to bear. The Young Man that intends to repent, ſhould often ſeriouſly conſider what the Apoſtle ſaith, 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. *In Meekneſs inſtructing them that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth. And that they may recover themſelves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are*

are led Captive by him, at his will: We are to understand the Apostle as well with reference to Errors of Practice as to Errours of Judgment. Men oppose the Truth as well by wicked Lives as by corrupt Principles. Methinks the Young Man should be afraid to Sin in hopes of Repentance, if he considers what the Apostle speaks in this place concerning it. There are three things observeable.

1. Repentance is the Gift of GOD, and what Reason hath any man to expect that Gift from God, who breaks his most Righteous Laws, dishonours his most Holy Name, and casts all manner of Contempt upon him, in hopes of that Gift? VVas it ever known, that any man did that which he knew to be offensive to another, in hopes of his Favour? Did ever any man in his Wits, disoblige another in hopes of a Gift from him?

him? That a man ſhould give himſelf to the ſervice of ſin, in hopes that God will give him Repentance inſtead of the Puniſhment of his ſin, is ſuch a piece of Folly and Madneſs, that he may be aſhamed and confounded to think of it; and very probable it is, that he is unwilling ſeriouſly to think of it, that he may avoid Shame and Confuſion as long as he can.

2. The young man may obſerve that the Apoſtle puts it upon a *PERADVENTURE* whether God will beſtow this Gift upon him, when all poſſible means is uſed to reclaim him. The Young Man ſhould therefore conſider; that if he bears the Yoke now, he may be aſſured of the Love and Favour of God, and rejoyce in it all his dayes; but if he neglects it in hopes of Repentance afterwards, though Miniſters ſhould uſe their utmoſt endeavours, by all Meek and Kind Intrea-

Intreaties and Inſinuations to bring him to the Practice of Religion, yet it is a queſtion whether they can prevail, becauſe they cannot give Repentance.

It is to be feared, there are many Sinners who continue a ſinful life after they are ſo convinced of the Folly and Madneſs thereof, as to need no Arguments for their farther conviction, becauſe God is juſtly provoked by their long reſiſting his grace to withdraw it for the future: And after theſe are fully convinced of their Danger they do both fail in their ſtrivings to ſubdue their Luſts, and imploring, as they ought, the Divine Grace for the ſucceſs of endeavours to that end. So that men continue impenitent againſt all perſwaſions, and againſt the reaſon of their own minds, for want of this Gift of GOD, which he ſometimes may

may, as I ſaid, refuſe in his Judgment to continue. From whence 'tis manifeſt that it is a *PERADVENTURE* whether he that holds on in Sinning in hopes of Repentance hereafter, ſhall obtain it when he deſires it.

3. When the Sinner hath refuſed the Yoke and hopes for Repentance afterwards, he is in the mean time in the *Snare of the Devil, and led Captive by him.* Let the Young Man conſider what a hopeful Condition he is like to be in, if he doth not fear God in his Youth. There are two things which he may conſider from this Expreſſion of the Apoſtle; one is Certain, and that is he ſhall be in the Snare of the Devil, another is Uncertain, and that is whether he ſhall ever *recover himſelf*, and get out of it. The Young Man cannot ſay, that it is beſt for him

him to ſerve God in his Youth, for fear he ſhould be in the Snare of the Devil, and be his Captive if he does not, for that he is ſure of, there is no *Peradventure* belongs to that; but only to his eſcape out of it, which is very hazardous, becauſe it muſt be given him from that God whom he hath all along offended and provoked to anger.

From this that I have ſaid, the Caſe of the young man is ſtated right: He is at his choice whether he will have Gods *Yoke*, or be in the Devils Snare, and he cannot but ſee what an uncomfortable thing it is, that he ſhonld reſolve (againſt the force of all Arguments from Gods Word and his tender Conſcience) to accept of the Devils invitation into his Snare, in hopes that God by Repentance will afterwards fetch him out of it.

Thus

Thus I have ſhewed how unreaſonable it is for men to ſin in hopes of Repentance; from the conſideration of what it is in it ſelf.

Let not therefore thoſe that are Young be ſo fooliſh as to do that in their Youth, which they cannot but know muſt needs coſt them bitterneſs of ſoul hereafter. And let not any think that Repentance conſiſts wholly of ſorrow for ſin, how deep ſoever it is, for then ſinners may be ſecured that they ſhall go to Heaven, if they do not die ſuddenly, and inſenſibly of what they have done: for it is ſcarcely to be imagined that a man ſhould look upon baſe actions, when he is dying, and not Repent and be Sorry for them. The Young Man may promiſe himſelf that he ſhall be ſorry for what he hath done, but he cannot promiſe the Renewing Grace of God, without which all ſorrow for ſin, will no whit avail him.

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